

BOYS, READ THE RADIO ARTICLES IN THIS NUMBER

JANUARY 11, 1924

No. 954

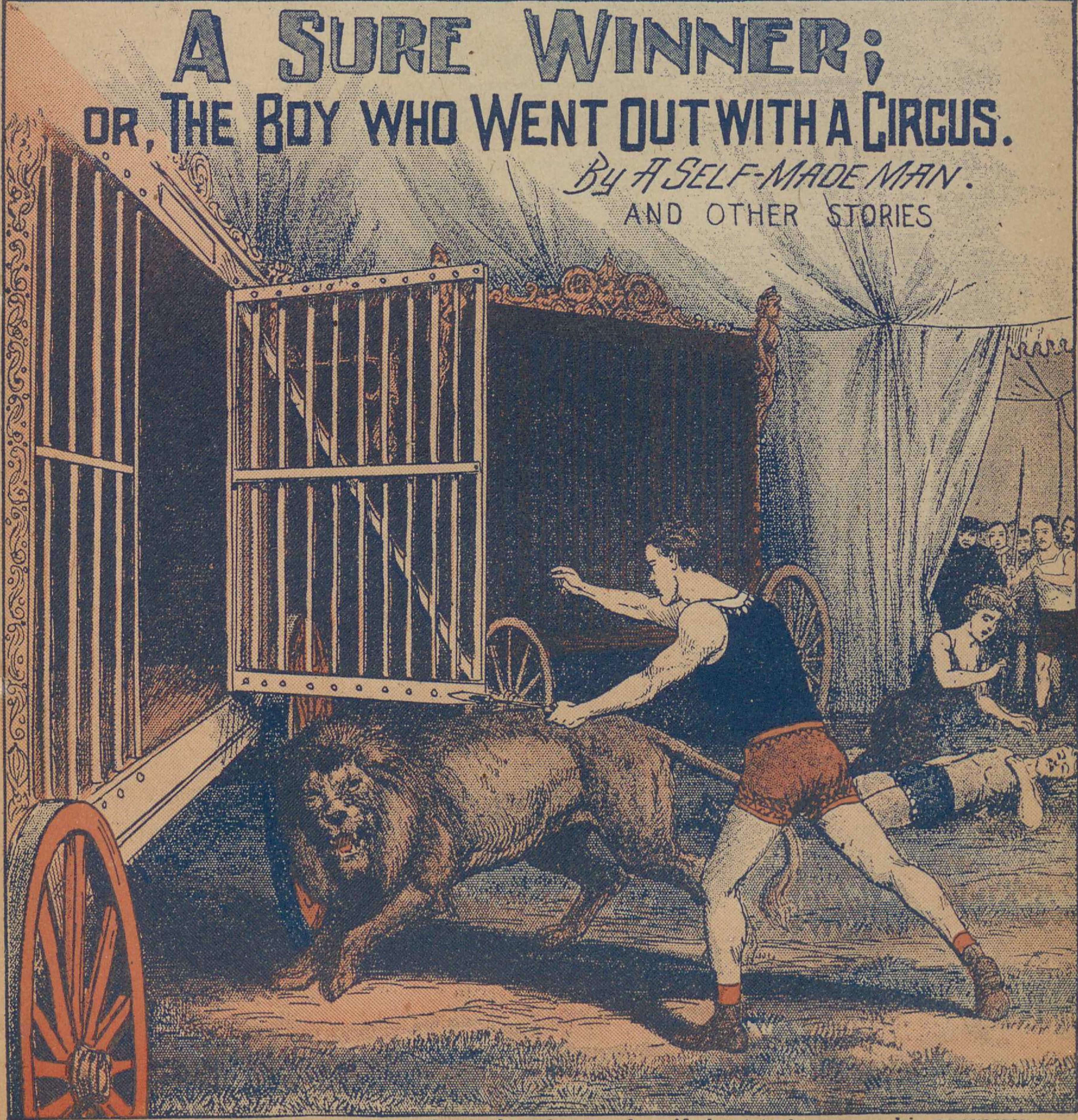
Price 7 Cents

FAAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

A SURE WINNER;
OR, THE BOY WHO WENT OUT WITH A CIRCUS.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.
AND OTHER STORIES



The lion sprang back with a smothered growl, and seemed as if about to leap upon his aggressor; but the lad, undaunted by the peril he was facing, followed up his first advantage, and literally drove Rajah back to his cage.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

Issued weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 168 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 11, 1924

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A SURE WINNER

OR, THE BOY WHO WENT OUT WITH A CIRCUS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Luke Bagley Yields to Temptation.

"See here, Nick, where are you goin'?" asked Luke Bagley, a big, lazy-looking boy of fifteen, with a sallow complexion, protruding, lobster-like eyes, and a turned-up nose of scant proportions, of a bright, red-cheeked lad of fourteen, attired in shabby garments that did not fit his supple, well-knit frame.

"I'm going into the field to hoe potatoes," answered Nick Long, without pausing in his walk.

He had a long hoe in his hand, and his brown curly hair was covered by an ancient broad-brimmed straw hat as a protection against the summer sun.

"Well, I'm goin' fishin', and I want you to go into the garden and dig some worms for bait. Do you understand?" said Luke, in a commanding tone.

"You'll have to dig your own worms this time, Luke. Your father told me to go into the field right away."

"Never mind what my father told you. Do as I tell you. You can go to the field afterward."

"I've got to obey your father, Luke," replied Nick, pausing to open a gate leading into the lane.

"Do you mean to say you won't do as I tell you?" cried Luke Bagley, advancing upon his father's hired boy in a threatening manner.

"If I don't do as your father tells me, you know he'll take a cowhide to me."

"That ain't my business," grinned the big boy, maliciously.

"Well, it's my business," replied Nick, resolutely, opening the gate.

"Here, stop! Come back and dig those worms for me. There's a can," and Luke tossed an old tomato can toward Nick.

"Can't do it," replied the hired boy, pulling the gate to after him.

"I'll pay you up for this, see if I don't," snarled Luke, in a fit of anger at the big's refusal to obey him.

Nick Long paid no further attention to him, but went on his way toward the potato field. He was getting tired of Luke Bagley's overbearing and tyrannical behavior toward him. He would have resented it long before but for the fact that Luke

was always sustained by his mother, a sharp-featured, penurious woman, with a disposition resembling vinegar, who thought her only son was about as perfect as boys come. Mr. Bagley also backed his son up, as a rule, when ever it was a question of veracity between his spoiled heir and the hired boy. This Western farmer, who was an obstinate, not over-intelligent man, had taken Nick from the poor farm when the boy was ten and had treated him more or less as a slave ever since he had been on the farm. He grudgingly permitted Nick to attend school during the winter months, because that was one of the conditions of the contract, and because work about the place was naturally slack at that season. In this way Nick managed to get nearly six month's tuition at the district school every year, while Luke received the benefit of the full term—from the beginning of September to the end of May.

As Luke was not overbright, and was inclined to shirk his studies, the hired boy learned twice as much as he did in two-thirds of the time. Nick was a very industrious and conscientious worker on the farm, but he did not get any credit for it, just the same. When the busy times were on he was driven hard, and got roundly abused, into the bargain, when the farmer looked about for some one on whom to vent his ill-humor. All Nick knew about his parentage was what the overseer informed him the day he was apprenticed to Mr. Bagley. He was born in Salem village, his mother, who was a stranger to the place, dying almost immediately after his birth, of an epidemic. As there was no clue to his mother's identity, she was buried in the village cemetery, in a sunny corner of the lot, and the infant was taken to the poor farm, where it thrived and grew into a bright and intelligent lad. This was the sum and total of Nick's history. What his real name ought to have been was a mystery, but the omission was supplied by the overseer of the poor farm, and under the name of Nick Long the lad was bound out to William Bagley. It was hot work hoeing potatoes on that July morning, and Nick was glad when he heard the horn sound for dinner. Not that he had any great anticipations of a bountiful repast awaiting him in the kitchen of the farmhouse, though he was hungry enough to do justice to a big square meal.

One member of the household succeeded in getting about all he wanted in the eating line, and that, as the reader may suppose, was Luke. If there was a deficiency on his side of the house at any time, he set up a strenuous kick, with the result that somebody else had to suffer, and it is hardly necessary to mention who the chief sufferer was. When Nick entered the kitchen, after washing up at the pump, he found the family already at the table. There was a small piece of meat on his plate, about two bites, and a hunk of stale bread beside, with a full glass of milk. Luke had already consumed his allowance, and had just managed to secure half the hired boy's share; that was why Nick had so little with which to try and satisfy a healthy appetite. He never thought of raising an objection to the meagerness of his fare. That would have been looked upon as rank rebellion to the established customs of the house, and he would probably have been deprived of the little there was as a fit punishment for such presumption on his part.

"Pa," said Luke, gobbling down an apple turnover that had been specially cooked for him, "there's a circus in Brentville to-day."

Brentville was a big town on the railroad, about six miles from the farm.

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Bagley.

"I want to go."

"I hain't got no time or money to waste on circuses," replied the farmer, ungraciously, for his best horse had gone lame that morning, and in consequence he was in bad humor.

"Ma, can't I go?" persisted Luke.

"I ain't got nuthin' to say," she answered.

"It'll only cost me fifty cents."

"Fifty cents is a lot of money," said Mrs. Bagley.

Nick, who was quietly listening to the conversation, agreed with the lady of the house. Fifty cents was a lot of money in his eyes, for he had never owned that much in his life. Just then there were the sounds of wagon wheels in the yard, and Mrs. Bagley rose hastily and looked out through the window.

"There's the butcher," she said. "We must get a nice juicy piece off the round, as the minister is comin' to supper this evenin'. Give me some money, pa."

"How much do you want?" asked the master of the house, reluctantly putting his hand into his pocket for such stray coins as he carried there.

"Half a dollar will do."

"I don't see no sense buyin' so much meat," objected Mr. Bagley.

"We've got to make a show before the minister, pa," she replied.

Evidently it was like drawing a tooth to separate the farmer from so large an amount as fifty cents, for he passed the silver piece over to his wife very grudgingly. Nick saw Luke follow the money with longing eyes. Mrs. Bagley laid the money on the kitchen dresser and then went out to haggle with the butcher, who always put the price up to her first, because, from experience, he knew he had to reduce the price to make a sale. Mr. Bagley presently got up from the table and went out to the barn, leaving the two boys alone at the table. Nick had his famished eye on a hunk of bread which lay on the bread dish, and he was wishing Luke would follow his father, so

he could get it, for he knew if the boy saw him appropriating the thick slice he would immediately report the fact to his mother, and that would mean a flogging. Ordinarily Luke would have suspected Nick's design and have frustrated it, but just now his thoughts were wholly absorbed with the circus. From where he sat he caught the glitter of the fifty-cent piece where it reposed on the corner of the kitchen dresser, and the sight of it made his mouth water. Finally a desperate plan came into his head. He was just crazy to go to the circus, and he was ready to take some chances in order to gratify his longing. He left his chair suddenly, went to the door leading into the yard and looked out. His mother was talking to the butcher beside the wagon. Then he looked back and saw Nick reaching for the slice of bread. Instead of yelling at the hired boy, as he naturally would have done, he simply grinned, and tip-toeing toward the dresser, reached out his hand and grabbed the piece of money. As he did so, Nick looked around quickly to see if Luke had really gone, and he was intensely surprised to observe the theft. After securing the money, Luke walked in an unconcerned way to the door and went outside.

"My gracious!" ejaculated Nick, aghast at the action of the son of the house, "he's stolen the money to go to the circus."

If he hadn't been so hungry he would probably have rushed out after Luke to remonstrate with the boy, as he possessed very rigid ideas as to the heinousness of such an offense. He decided to take Luke to task about the matter later on and make him disgorge. Then he refilled his glass from the milk pitcher and hastily swallowed the last of the bread, after he had liberally buttered it. The milk followed the bread, and he even had the hardihood to take what was left in the pitcher on top of that. As the table was now quite bare of everything in the eatable line, Nick wiped his mouth and started for the barn, almost running into Mrs. Bagley, who was preceding the butcher into the kitchen. Nick saw Luke disappearing behind the barn, and he followed him.

Nick came up behind him and laid his hand on his shoulder. With a cry of alarm Luke started back, and the coin dropped to the ground. Nick stooped down and, picking it up, coolly put it in his pocket.

CHAPTER II.—The Hero of This Story Himself in a Grave Predicament.

"Give me back that money, you beggar!" cried Luke, furiously.

"You stole that money from the kitchen dresser," replied Nick, accusingly.

"I didn't do no such thing. Hand it over."

"You know I am telling the truth, Luke. It is an awful thing to rob your mother."

"I never took the money," snarled Luke, viciously. "It belongs to me, and I want you to give it up."

"I am going to return it to your mother."

"I'll kill you if you dare do such a thing," exclaimed the spoiled boy, rushing at Nick and trying to kick him in the shins.

The hired boy was much stronger than he looked—stronger, in fact, than his older and

heavier opponent, and he managed to hold him off. Luke looked around for a stone, but, not seeing one, he was about to make another mad rush, when his eye lighted on a cowhide whip hanging against the side of the barn. He snatched it down from the nail and, dashing at Nick, brutally struck him across the shoulders and neck.

"Don't you do that again, Luke," cried the hired boy, aroused by the sting of the heavy whip-lash.

But Luke intended to do it again, and raised the whip on high for that purpose. Nick, however, had stood as much as he was going to stand. He dodged quickly, rushed in under his enemy's arm and, reaching up, snatched the cowhide from his grasp. Luke gave him a vicious kick in the leg.

"I'll have to teach you manners," cried Nick, giving him a smart lash about the legs.

Luke roared like a wounded bull. Mrs. Bagley had run down to the barn after the hired boy, and met her husband coming out of the building. They appeared on the scene of trouble just as Nick raised the whip again on pretenses of giving the boy another taste of its tickling qualities.

"You villain!" screamed Mrs. Bagley, rushing at the hired boy like a wildcat. "Are you tryin' to murder my son?"

She snatched the whin from him and brought it down with all her might on Nick's back. With a gasp of pain, Nick jumped back out of reach of the infuriated woman, and began rubbing his bruised arm where part of the blow had landed.

"Save me, mother!" cried Luke. "He wants to kill me."

The enormity of the offense fairly staggered Mr. Bagley, and he simply stood back and gazed at his hired boy with a look of horror.

"Tried to kill my son, did you, you wretch!" cried Mrs. Bagley, threatening Nick with the whip. "What is the world comin' to, I wonder?"

"I didn't hurt him any," replied the hired boy, doggedly.

"Oh, you snake in the grass! You thief, you!" screamed the angry woman.

"Thief!" gasped Nick.

"Yes. Where is that half-dollar you stole from the kitchen dresser?"

Nick was fairly paralyzed at the accusation. Luke heard his mother's words and his little brain saw a way out of his dilemma.

"He's got it in his pocket, ma," he cried, eagerly.

"Luke took that money," said Nick, desperately. "And I took it away from him, intending to return it to you."

"Don't you believe him, ma. I didn't do no such thing."

"How dare you accuse my innocent boy of such a crime, you pauper!" cried Mrs. Bagley, advancing on Nick with upraised whip.

The hired boy retreated before her. At this point Mr. Bagley got a bright idea into his head. He was only playing a second fiddle where he was, so he withdrew from his position, ran around the barn and, appearing at the other side, dashed out at Nick and caught him by the arms, making him a prisoner.

"That's right, William," said his wife, approvingly. "Now put your hand into his pocket and get that money he stole."

He dived his hand into one of Nick's trousers pockets and brought up the money.

"There it is, Sarah," he said, exhibiting the silver piece.

"The little thief!" ejaculated Mrs. Bagley. "To think we've been a-warmin' a viper in our bosoms all these years!"

"I didn't take that money, ma'am," persisted Nick. "Your son took it off the dresser, and I came out here after him to make him give it up."

"Oh, ma, that's an awful lie!" chipped in Luke, hastily.

"I'll lick him till he can't stand up," said Mr. Bagley, who, as we have already mentioned, was not in a good humor, and he intended to relieve his feelings by making his hired boy suffer the keenest anguish he could inflict upon him.

Nick, in the course of his four years of servitude, had received several whippings at the farmer's hands, but had managed to evade the worst part of them by breaking away and getting out of range. Still, he had acquired evidence enough that Mr. Bagley could wield a cowhide with stinging effect.

"I'm going to tie you up to a post in the barn, you little scamp, and when I get through with you you'll wish you'd never been born."

Mrs. Bagley, after receiving back the half-dollar, had withdrawn from the scene to settle with the butcher, who had been impatiently awaiting her reappearance. So her husband, gripping his victim tighter, to be sure he wouldn't get away, dragged the unfortunate boy around into the barn and tied him up to a convenient post.

"Here's the whip, pa," grinned Luke, appearing at the door with the instrument of torture.

Mr. Bagley was preparing to shut the door in his graceless son's face, when a carriage drove into the yard and a stranger, alighting from it, presented himself at the kitchen door. Mrs. Bagley received him with company manners, and, learning that the gentleman had called to see her husband on particular business, called out to Luke:

"Tell your pa to come to the house right away."

CHAPTER III.—Our Hero Comes Face to Face With a Real Circus for the First Time.

"I'll attend to your case when I return," said Mr. Bagley to Nick, throwing the whip on the barn floor. "It will do you good to think over what you're going to get. I'm going to take the hide off your back this time," he growled, menacingly. "I'm just in the humor of it. I'll bet you'll never forget this lickin' as long as you live."

With that he left the barn, securing the big door behind him. Luke, who was curious to learn what the stranger wanted, followed him to the house. Thus Nick, for the time being, was left alone.

He expected nothing else than that Mr. Bagley would half-kill him on his return to the barn.

"If I could only manage to get rid of this strap that holds me I'd run away. I wouldn't care if I starved. I'm half-starved, as it is, anyway. I'm treated as if I were a slave. I don't see why I have stood it so long. Any other boy would

have run away long ago. Well, I guess I've reached the limit. It'll be the last whipping he'll ever give me, but I do wish I could avoid it somehow. It's pretty tough to stand a cowhiding. Nobody but a coward would treat a boy of my age so cruelly. Mr. Bagley is only a brute, anyway, and as for Luke—”

Crack! The strap confining his arms had suddenly given way, for while he was muttering the foregoing he had been straining hard at his bonds.

“Thank goodness, I’m free!” he ejaculated.

Picking up the broken strap, he looked at it.

“The old thing was rotten. It’s a lucky thing for me that Mr. Bagley is too mean to provide himself with decent harness. The first thing I’m going to do is to put that horsewhip out of his reach.”

There was a big knothole in the flooring, and Nick thrust the rawhide into it, and it fell somewhere out of sight.

“The next thing is to escape from the barn, and after that from this neighborhood. I’ve had all I want of Mr. Bagley. I’ve earned my board and second-hand clothes several times over since I’ve been here. It’s about time I earned a dollar or two in money for myself. I’d like to go to school a while longer, but I suppose I’ll have to give that up now. Probably I’ll get a chance to study evenings when my time is my own.”

The fact that Mr. Bagley had secured the big barn door when he went up to the house did not greatly disturb Nick. He knew there were two closed window openings—one in the back, through which manure was tossed, and one in the side of the barn. He could put his hand on either in the dark, consequently it was an easy matter for him to find one of them now. He unbarred the rear one, glanced out to see if the coast was clear, and, finding that it was, he jumped out. As a precautionary measure he looked around the corner of the barn in the direction of the farmhouse.

“Gracious!” he exclaimed, with a quiet chuckle. “I got out just in the nick of time, for here comes Mr. Bagley now. I wonder what he’ll say when he finds I have cut stick?”

Ah! Young Nick Long! If you had known what Mr. Bagley wanted you for now you would have rushed to meet him, instead of flying for the nearest fence and vaulting it, and then running across the meadows as fast as you could go.

Nick was making the mistake of his life just then, but as he didn’t know it, why, it didn’t trouble him. And it was several years before he found out how Dame Fortune had rolled his way on her wheel that bright July afternoon, and how, just as she had stretched out her hand to seize him, he had eluded her. It wasn’t because there was a circus at Brentville that Nick directed his steps in that direction. No; it was because Brentville was a good-sized town on the railroad, and he hoped to pick up a job there, that Nick aimed for it. It was about six o’clock when Nick approached the out-skirts of the town, and, as luck would have it, almost the first thing he spied was the circus tent, for it was only a single-ring affair, with its group of smaller canvas tops strung about under its lee. As Nick stood with arms thrown over the top of the bar fence, gazing with a kind of wondrous awe upon the

sun-kissed tents, with their waving flags and streamers hanging listlessly in the calm air, the quiet of a Sabbath afternoon seemed to rest upon the field. Finally the boy got over the fence and crossed the field toward the tents. The performers had had their evening meal, and some of them were gathered on the greensward back of the tents. The women were busy with fancy work and sewing; the men talking over the gossip of the ring. No one paid any attention to Nick as he walked slowly around the canvas walls and wondered when the time would come when he would have the price that would admit him to the wondrous show of which this was a type. At last he paused in front of the side-show tent. Here a row of huge banners pictured by word and brush the wild man, the midget, the knife-throwers, the fortune-tellers, the snake charmer, the fat woman, the living skeleton, and others who made up the collection of oddities. In front of the side-show entrance stood a platform, known in showmen’s parlance as a “bally-hoo stage,” where, as promised the multitude, certain free exhibitions are given to capture the attention of the spectators. While Nick was looking at it and wondering what it was used for, a man came up behind him and, after a covert smile at the quaintness of the boy’s attire, said:

“Say, sonny, how would you like to have a job for the evening?”

CHAPTER IV.—Our Hero Joins the Circus.

Nick was a bit startled by being addressed so suddenly from behind, for he had been under the impression that he was quite alone.

“Do you want a job?” repeated the man, eyeing the boy keenly. “I’ll give you a quarter if you’ll help me sell candy, peanuts and lemonade in the tent to-night. My regular help was taken sick at Benton, our last stop, and he was sent to the hospital, so, you see, I’m short-handed.”

Here was an unexpected chance to earn something that Nick felt he couldn’t afford to let get by him, so he answered:

“Yes, sir.”

“Good,” replied the candy-butcher. “Live ‘round the neighborhood?”

“No, sir,” answered Nick, shaking his head dolefully.

“I thought you did,” said the man, in some surprise. “Might I ask where you do live?”

“Nowhere,” returned Nick, with a melancholy look.

“Nowhere!” ejaculated the candy man.

Then he looked the boy over sharply.

“You look as if you’d come off some farm where they were mighty sparing of clothes. Those trousers seem to fit you too quick,” he went on with a grin.

“Yes, sir. These are some of Luke Bagley’s cast-off duds. Those are the only kind of clothes I’ve ever had since I left the poor farm.”

“Who is Luke Bagley?” asked the man, curiously.

“Mr. Bagley’s son. He’s bigger and older than I.”

“I should imagine he was. Who is Mr. Bagley—a farmer?”

"Yes, sir."

"Have you run away from him?"

"Yes, sir."

"What for? Thought you'd try and join the circus?" with another grin.

"No, sir. Didn't think of such a thing."

"Are you a hustler?"

"If you mean can I work hard, I'll say yes. I haven't done anything else for the last four years, except on Sundays and in the winter, when I went to school."

"Any chance of your late master turning up here to-night and making things unpleasant?" with a keen look.

"He won't spend fifty cents visiting a circus. I heard him say so to-day."

"Say, what was the reason you left him, any way?"

"The principal reason was that he intended to beat the life out of me with a rawhide."

"What for? Been up to some monkey-shines?"

"No, sir," and then Nick related the events of the afternoon to his new employer. The boy spoke with such sincerity that Mr. Hanks was persuaded to believe him.

"Well, it's getting late. The people are beginning to come around, so it's time we got busy. By the way, I forgot to ask your name."

"Nick Long."

"My name is Hanks. My side-partner, who tends the outside booth, is Andy Tooker. Now come on—I'll introduce you to him."

"Do you suppose I could get something to eat before I started in?"

"Haven't had your supper, then?"

"No, sir. I wouldn't care if I'd had a good dinner. But the Bagleys don't spread much of a table, and half the time Luke got away with my share before I reached the kitchen. Then I walked six miles or more this afternoon."

"There isn't any chance of you getting supper now, Nick. However, I'll see if I can get you a couple of sandwiches. That'll do for the present, won't it?"

"Yes, sir."

So Nick was escorted to the outside booth and introduced to Mr. Hanks' partner, Andy Tooker, a man of about twenty-five, who had all the earmarks of a born hustler, and was dressed in a rather loud suit of clothes, with a large imitation diamond in his broad-triped shirt-front.

When the doors of the big tent opened and the people began to crowd in, Andy Tooker, who had been keeping Nick well employed on the outside, told the boy that it was time for him to go into the tent and help his partner. Nick found that his chief duty was to perambulate the seats, first with boxes of candy, then bags of peanuts, and finally with a tray filled with glasses of a rose-colored liquor supposed to be lemonade. Each time he made his round he carried a different article, beginning with candy again as soon as he had exhausted the immediate demand for lemonade. A short time, however, after the performance had begun the canvasmen began to get busy. The ropes and stakes holding in position the menagerie tent were loosened, and the doorkeeper moved to open the fly of the big tent. The cages were loosed, horses hitched, side walls lowered, and the caravan passed out into the night to take up their position at a distance until the entire show

was subsequently ready to move on to the next destination. The order, "Lower away!" rang out sharply, and the menagerie tent dropped to the ground. Only the noisy "big top," glowing like a mammoth mushroom, and the sideshow canvas, where the band thumps and the "barker" roars with tireless energy, remained to mark the spot. The work of stripping the larger tent continued throughout the performance. As fast as a performer finished his act his appliance was deftly conveyed to a waiting wagon. The entire arena was divested of its maze of apparatus before the audience had filed outside after the show.

CHAPTER V.—The Circus Enters Sidney.

When the performance was nearly over, Nick had to help the candy butchers in packing up, and by the time the last spectator left the big tent the stock in trade of Hanks and Tooker was ready for removal, and then Nick was told that his time was his own until he should be called upon next morning to begin a fresh day's labor.

"Hold on, Nick," cried Andy Tooker, as the boy was sauntering away to watch the taking down of the 'big top.' "You're hungry, I guess, aren't you?"

"Well, some," replied the lad, in a tone which left little room for doubt but that he was in shape to masticate a small-sized elephant, if nicely cooked.

"Come with me, then."

The light and airy Mr. Tooker guided Nick to a small booth, where a number of the performers, and such other employees as were now at liberty, were partaking of a light repast of sandwiches and milk, provided by the proprietor of the show each night after the performance.

"Help yourself to whatever you see," said the candy butcher, "and don't stand on ceremony. You're welcome to eat all you can put under your jacket."

"Who's this you've got in tow, Tooker?" asked one of the acrobats, who was standing back with a glass of milk in one hand and a sandwich in the other.

"New boy," replied the candy man. "He's taken Smith's place."

"Oh, I see. Looks like a bright fellow; but gracious! where did he get the clothes? They fit him about as well as Lew Dockstader's stage dress suit does the minstrel."

"He's been working on a farm in the neighborhood and getting the short end of everything. He ran away to-day. My partner came across him on the lot about sundown, and as we needed a boy badly, why, we hired him."

"Where do I sleep to-night, Mr. Tooker?" asked Nick, after they left the eating booth.

"In our wagon," replied the candy man. "Come with me, and I'll point it out to you."

All through the night the procession of wagons, with their paraphernalia and slumbering occupants, lumbered along the country road, and finally came to rest in a long line, drawn up by the side of the road, within a couple of miles of the next big town at which the circus was to show that day and evening. Nick being accustomed to turning out of bed at sunrise, he mechanically

awoke about that time, and was a bit surprised to find that the vehicle was at rest. His companions, the two candy butchers and several canvasmen, were sleeping peacefully about him. At first he was a bit dazed by his new surroundings and wondered if he wasn't dreaming. But gradually the events of the previous day and night unrolled themselves before his mind, and he soon realized that he had actually embarked upon a new career in life—an attache of the biggest wagon show in the United States. He lay a little while speculating upon what the future had in store for him, and then, growing weary of the confinement of the closed wagon, he picked his way over the other sleepers to the partly open door and jumped down into the road. It was lovely cool morning and Nick felt like a top. Nick glanced ahead along the line of waiting wagons, the horses standing with their heads down under the blankets and the drivers curled up asleep on the roofs.

"I wonder if we're near a town?" thought the boy.

He mounted the wheels of the forward wagon and saw in the distance the houses and some of the big buildings of Sidney, with the rays of the early sun flashing upon windows and roofs. There was a small rivulet not far away, and thither Nick went to wash his face.

"I wish I had some decent clothes," he thought. "I look like a guy in these. I'll have to work some time before I can get together enough to buy me a suit."

One of the younger performers connected with the show—a noted bareback rider—came up at this moment.

"Hello!" said the newcomer, looking Nick over critically, "where did you spring from? Work on a farm, I s'pose?"

"Not now," replied Nick, wiping his face in his not overclean pocket-handkerchief. "I belong to the circus."

"You do?" replied the other, incredulously. "I don't remember seeing you before."

"Only joined last night."

"What are you doing? You are not a new freak in the 'kid show' (sideshow), are you?" with a grin.

"No," replied Nick, shaking his head good-naturedly. "I suppose I look like a curiosity, as if I'd come out of Noah's Ark. I'm working for Hanks & Tooker, candy, peanuts and lemonade."

"Oh, I see. Fallen into Smith's shoes. Well, I wish you luck. I must say you've got pretty decent bosses, considering how they run."

"They've treated me all right so far."

"You ought to have worked for some of the chaps I've known; then you'd be able to appreciate the snap you've got."

"What was the matter with the chaps you knew?"

"Oh, they were dead hard on their boys. Never satisfied with what they did. Roasted them right along till they got tired of the life and ran away."

"A kind of Mr. Bagley, I guess," replied Nick.

"Mr. Bagley? Who's he?"

"The farmer I worked for the last four years. He didn't do a thing but work me from daylight to dark. I never could do enough to satisfy him, so he scolded me right along, and when he was not feeling just right he'd vary the performance by

giving me a licking. I got sick of it at last and ran away from him for good."

"That's how you came to hire out to the candy butchers?"

"Yes. Is that what you call them?"

"That's the name in the business."

"I thought all butchers sold meat," said Nick, innocently.

"Well, you've got another think coming, so don't be a yap. What's your name?"

"Nick Long. What's yours?"

"Allan Ramsay. I'm a 'kinker'."

"What are you?" asked Nick, to whom circus phraseology was like so much Greek.

"I'm a performer—a bareback rider. Performers are called 'kinkers'."

"Say, tell me why we're waiting out here on the road a mile or two from town," said Nick, eagerly.

"We stay here until time to make the grand entree into the town. Then every man, horse and wagon will be decked out in the most gorgeous array. The band will take the lead, and the parade will be on."

When Nick returned to the road again he found everything changed. From one end of the long wagon train to the other was life and motion. Men were hurrying to and fro, while orders were being shouted in stentorian tones and rapidly executed. Troops of horses were being groomed and attended to. When Nick returned to the vicinity of the wagon where he had slept he found Mr. Tooker looking for him.

"Where have you been, young man?" asked the junior boss, sharply.

Nick hastened to explain.

"Well, you want to keep closer to business after this. There's lots for you to do. There's glasses, spoons, knives and other utensils for you to scrub. Take that bucket and fill it at the spring. You'll find soap and towels in one of our boxes. Step lively now. When you get things shipshape you can go down to that stand and get a sandwich and a cup of coffee. That'll have to do you till you get your dinner at the hotel."

Nick didn't need to be told twice to get busy, and the way he went at his work met the unqualified approval of his two bosses.

"He's a smart boy," remarked Hanks to his partner. "I hope we'll be able to keep him."

"I don't think you need worry," replied Tooker. "Just leave him to me, and I guess he'll stick all right."

Some time before the procession was ready to start, Nick had finished his work and was industriously getting on the outside of a huge meat sandwich and a cup of steaming coffee. The acrobat who had noticed him the night before at the "snackstand" spoke to him when he saw him at the eating booth, and introduced him to a couple of other performers who came up to sample the morning fare. Later on he was introduced to the clown, who in turn made him acquainted with his wife and daughter. The former was the "mother" of the show, while the latter, a pretty girl of twenty, was one of the star bareback riders, who did all kinds of stunts over banners and through tissue-covered hoops. At last everything was in readiness, and the procession, all gaudy with banners, streamers and flags, with

the band playing fortissimo, entered the streets of Sidney.

The parade was preceded by the general manager on horseback. He had already been over the route once, noting its conditions born of long experience. Sometimes his foresight bids him change the route, for at some points the road may be too rough, or a bridge may not look strong enough to bear an elephant, or perhaps the advance man did not appreciate that at a certain point the parade would "double" on itself. Through densely crowded streets the procession measured its gaudy passage. But long before the procession reached the lot, Nick was there helping to get the candy and peanut stands in shape, while the canvasmen were raising the tents into position.

CHAPTER VI.—Our Hero Takes His First Lesson in Horsemanship.

Nick had to cut up lemons and assist in the compounding of that mysterious decoction called circus lemonade. In the meantime the parade reached the lot, and soon the performers were resuming their every-day attire, in readiness to go to the hotel for dinner. Nick accompanied the first lot of them and secured a place at the table with Allan Ramsay and several other performers, to whom he was introduced. In a short time the big tent began to fill up for the afternoon performance, and the indications showed that the seating capacity would be taxed to the limit. Nick's experience that afternoon was very similar to what it had been during the previous evening, and he was kept on the run until the performance was over, shortly before five o'clock.

And so, for some weeks after that, there was scarcely any variation in the life led by Nick Long. Nick's engaging manners and wonderful good nature, added to his good looks, soon made him a favorite among the performers, and eventually attracted the attention of the equestrian director. That gentleman looked him over critically, and finally asked him how he'd like to learn to ride a horse, with the ultimate purpose of becoming a bareback rider.

"I don't believe I'd be able to learn, sir," replied Nick, doubtfully.

"Nonsense!" answered the director. "You'd learn fast enough under a competent instructor. It's my opinion you're cut out for the business. You're only wasting your time peddling lemonade and candy around the 'big top.' What does Mr. Hanks pay you?"

"One dollar and a half a week."

"A paltry stipend," sniffed the equestrian director, "that any boy can earn after a day's practice. As a rider you will have a far easier time of it during the show season, and you will be able to command a salary from twenty-five dollars upward, according to the skill you display in your act. Think it over, Master Long, and let me know in a day or two."

"But who will teach me?" faltered Nick. "I haven't any money to pay for instruction, sir."

"Don't let that worry you, young man. Allan Ramsay told me he'd take you in hand and make you as good as himself. It won't cost you a nickel."

"Will Allan Ramsey really try to teach me how to ride like he does?" exclaimed Nick, for he and Allan had got to be great friends.

"Certainly he will, and take great pleasure in doing so."

"It's very kind of Allan," replied Nick, with a feeling of gratitude toward his new friend.

"Yes, it was very kind of Allan Ramsay, of course. But Ramsay had figured the matter all out, and saw an excellent chance for a fine rake-off to come his way. He proposed to make an agreement with Nick that would greatly redound to his own benefit when his young friend attained a proficiency which would enable him to go into the ring, and consequently upon the regular pay-roll.

Ramsay had a great business head, and, being a favorite with the equestrian director, had talked the matter up with him and gained his consent to the arrangement.

"You've got it in you, Nick," he said, encouragingly, when he met the boy that night after the show at the snackstand. "All you need is for some one to bring it out, and I'm the lad for that. I'll make a star of you before next spring."

"I don't like the idea of having you go to all the trouble of teaching me for nothing, Allan. If you will be satisfied to let me take it all right when I'm able to learn something as a rider, why—"

"We'll talk about that some other time," said Ramsay. "It was my idea to help you along in the business, but, of course, if you insist on paying me something—"

"I do," replied Nick, earnestly. "And I'm very grateful to you for the offer."

"Don't mention it, my boy. I've taken a fancy to you, and when I chum in with a fellow I'm willing to do most anything I can for him."

"I thank you very much, Allan."

"All right. We'll let it go at that. When will you be ready to begin?"

"I'll have to speak to Mr. Hanks and Mr. Tooker about it," said Nick, with some doubts as to how his employers would look upon the subject, which would compel them to lose the use of his valuable services for an hour each day.

"Oh, bother Hanks and Tooker," replied Ramsay, with a snap of his finger. "Who cares for them? I've only to speak to the equestrian director to make it all right."

"Well, I don't suppose I'll inconvenience them much, as I won't be able to go into the ring this season, will I?"

"No; I suppose not," admitted Ramsay.

"I'll tell Mr. Hanks to-morrow that you're going to teach me how to ride, and if he kicks up a fuss perhaps you'll speak to him yourself?"

"Sure I will, or Mr. Dickson, the director, will. They're not going to stand in your light, Nick—not if I know it," and he patted the boy encouragingly on the back.

Nick went to sleep that night with golden visions of the future dancing through his head. Next day he interviewed Mr. Hanks on the subject, and the candy butcher didn't like the plan worth a cent, for he and Mr. Tooker had already planned to keep Nick with them all winter down South, where they proposed continuing operations. Messrs. Hanks & Tooker thought they

knew when they had a good thing, and it was their intention to nurse it for all it was worth. However, their desires in the matter did not prevail. The equestrian director curtly told the candy butchers that Nick Long would be taught to ride by Allan Ramsay, and that was all there was to it. So that day, during the interval between dinner and the opening of the tent for the afternoon show, Nick received his first lesson in horsemanship. He accompanied Allan Ramsay into the ring, and a moment afterward an attendant led in a horse, with a broad wooden saddle. Then Nick noticed a curious piece of apparatus attached to the center pole of the tent.

"What's that?" he asked Ramsay, pointing at the wooden projection, which resembled nothing so much as a movable gallows.

"That's the 'mechanique,'" he replied. "It is largely used by circus riders when training or learning new feats.

It consisted of a belt which went around the waist of the performer, to which was attached a long, elastic rope, which was again fastened to a wooden, gibbet-like arm. The use of this machine is objected by some performers as reducing the nerve training to a minimum. It is, however, in great favor by all whose nerves are already steadied by experience and who are trying new tricks. In the case of women and children the "mechanique" is very frequently employed.

"Now, take off your shoes, coat and vest," said Ramsay.

Nick obeyed. The horse was led up, and Nick sprang upon the pad without assistance from his instructor. Ramsay nodded approvingly.

"Now," said the bareback rider, as he pulled down the belt which hung from the rope and fastened it around Nick's waist, "stand up and try to hold your balance. Remember, you can't fall."

Nick rose to his feet, and the sensation as the animal moved off at a walk around the sawdust ring was the most curious he had ever experienced in his life.

"How does it feel?" asked his friend, with a grin.

"Kind of funny," replied the boy.

"Now we'll go a little faster. Look out! Try your best to hold yourself upright."

Ramsay cracked the long whip he carried, and the horse broke into a gentle canter. The result was as Ramsay expected. Nick almost immediately lost his balance, the horse passed on from under him, and he was left dangling at the end of the rope like a mechanical spider at the end of a long rubber band. Ramsay grinned as his pupil made swimming motions in the air. Presently the horse came around again, and was stopped long enough for Nick to recover his footing on the broad saddle. The boy thought he never would be able to learn the difficult knack of standing on a horse's back, but before the lesson was over he managed to hold his own for one complete lap at a straight canter.

"First-rate," remarked Ramsay, approvingly. "That will do for to-day. We'll try again tomorrow."

The horse was led from the ring and Nick returned to his regular duty.

CHAPTER VII.—Our Hero Makes His Debut.

For three lessons only was the "mechanique" used to keep Nick from falling, and then Ramsay decided the boy was able to go it alone. Mr. Dickson, the equestrian director, occasionally came into the ring to watch the progress made by the boy, and one day he was accompanied by the proprietor of the show. Both of these gentlemen began to show considerable interest in Nick's instruction from that time on. The young tyro was doing much better even than had been expected of him in so short a time. He took to the line of business like a duck does to water. He was eager to learn, and profited by the good advice handed out to him by Ramsay.

"You're doing fine," remarked Dickson, at the end of the third week. "You'll soon be able to make your debut before the public."

"What does he mean by that?" asked Nick, nervously, of Ramsay, during a five-minute breathing spell.

"Oh, he's got an idea in his head," replied Ramsay, carelessly.

"He can't think of having me appear in the ring!" cried the boy, aghast.

"Don't worry. He won't ask that of you till you can do credit to your instructor," answered the performer, in an off-hand way.

"I should hope not," replied Nick, feeling much relieved, for the prospect of a public appearance in the immediate future dismayed him not a little. Just the same the equestrian director was figuring on that very thing. He and the proprietor had put their heads together, and this was the result of the conference. One of the features of the show was an equestrian act performed by Miss Bessie Abbott, daughter of the lion tamer, George Abbott. Bessie was twelve years of age, and was billed as Mlle Celestine, from the Cirque Oriental, Paris. Her father was featured as Signor Alto, and he did a series of remarkable stunts with his man-eating Nubian lion, Rajah. The equestrian director and the owner of the circus decided to introduce a new act, doubling Nick and Bessie in a high-sounding equestrian sensation, the details of which Mr. Dickson was evolving from his fertile brain. He had spoken to Ramsay about it, and Nick's instructor had fallen right in with the idea, for it ensured him a financial revenue from the boy's talents at an earlier date than he had expected. Consequently he was more assiduous in rounding the bright boy into shape. Nick had already met Bessie, and the two had become great friends, though they saw very little of each other.

One morning, when Nick was about half through his exercises, a second horse, equipped with a pad, was led into the arena, and almost immediately after, Bessie, in her regulation ring costume—tights, fluffy short skirts and a spangled bodice—came dancing in with the equestrian director, much to the boy's surprise.

"Now," said Dickson, in a business-like way, taking the whip from Ramsay, "I'm going to see what you two can do together."

He hoisted Bessie onto her pad, where she sat demurely, while the director began to explain the first part of the act he had in his mind.

"Now, then, get busy," said Dickson, sharply.

He cracked the whip and the two horses cantered off side by side around the ring. Bessie sprang gracefully to her feet, with her little ribbon-decked whip in her hand.

"Good gracious, Bessie!" exclaimed Nick, the perspiration gathering on his forehead. "What is Mr. Dickson up to? I won't be able to do a thing. I'm rattled completely."

A little silvery laugh floated from the girl's lips.

"Brace up, Nick!" she said, casting a saucy, roguish look upon him. "Just watch me and do as I do."

"But I can't," blurted the boy. "You're one of the stars, and I'm only—"

"Come now, you two; what are you wasting time for?" shouted Dickson. "Get a move on."

"Put your hand on my shoulder, Nick," the little lady said, sweetly. "Now follow me," and her raised one of her limbs and pointed it outward at an angle.

Nick imitated her. Then she leaned forward, pushing her foot out behind. Nick followed suit, and for an instant it looked as if he were going to take a tumble; but he didn't, for his arm on her shoulder steadied him. All things considered, Nick did very well at this first rehearsal, and was quite delighted to practise with the graceful little equestrienne.

"Well," laughed Ramsay, as he accompanied the boy back to the dressing-room, "how does the idea of making your professional debut with Bessie Abbott strike you?"

"Do you think I'll be able to make good?" he asked his teacher, anxiously.

"Do I? Well, I guess yes," replied Ramsay, confidently.

"And shall we practise together—Bessie and I—after this?" Ramsay nodded.

"That's the opening of your act you were doing to-day. You will go all over it again to-morrow, with such additions as Dickson tells you."

Next day, during the first half hour, Nick was taught to jump through a naked hoop, and finally wound up with a leap though the regulation tissue one. Then Bessie came on and they practised together. A week passed away, and then one morning Dickson stopped Nick as he was about to leave the ring, after Bessie and he had gone entirely through their act without a hitch.

"You and Bessie will appear together in public in Lexington, where we show next Monday," he said brusquely. "Your costume will be here by Saturday, on the night of which you will sever your connection with Hanks & Tooker. Your salary will be paid to Allan Ramsay, your instructor, for the balance of the season, and whatever money you may require he will give you. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied Nick, cheerfully.

"That's all," answered the equestrian director, walking off.

The circus entered Lexington, Ky., during the early hours of Sunday morning and proceeded directly to the lot. Almost the first thing the boys noticed was a long stand of circus bills, and prominently among them was a new one printed in two colors, as follows:

MADEMOISELLE CELESTINE,

The Youngest and Most Daring Equestrienne in the World, From the Cirque Oriental, Paris, and

HECTOR DE VRONDE,

The Dashing Meteor of the Ring,

From the Cirque Imperielle, Paris,

In Their Marvelous, Thrilling and Soul-stirring

Act,

Entitled

THE FLIGHT OF VENUS AND ADONIS.

A Fearless, Fearful, Fascinating Feat.

"Look at that, Bessie," cried Nick, devouring the contents of the three-sheet bill, the product of the press agent's exuberant fancy, with distended eyes.

"I see it," replied the pretty golden haired miss, with a rippling laugh. "Isn't it just lovely?"

"But Hector de Vronde! I don't understand—"

"Why, that's you, you goose!" she said, with a roguish smile.

"Why, my name is Nick Long, and I never came from the Cirque Imperielle, Paris."

"You silly boy! That's your professional name now."

"Oh! That's it. But read what it says: 'In their Marvelous, Thrilling and Soul-stirring Act.' What do you think of that?"

"It's that splendid," she replied, enthusiastically.

Monday afternoon came and an immense crowd was present, for it was a beautiful October day. At three o'clock Nick came from the men's dressing-room attired in blue trunks and pink fleshings, with a fancy whip in his hand. He was presently joined by Bessie, in all the glory of a brand-new spangled costume, that made her look, in Nick's eyes, like a novely little fairy. Ramsay was on hand to give the boy a word of advice and encouragement. The horses were all ready, and they stood champing their bits and pawing the earth in their impatience until the silver bells with which they were decorated rang out little shivering chimes that set Nick's blood in a mad whirl.

"That's your cue," said Ramsay, suddenly, as the band blared up.

The horses were led on while Dickson was introducing them much after the style of the poster. After executing, the first half of their act they came to a rest again when the music suddenly ceased. Then the clown chipped in.

"Well," he began, addressing the ringmaster, "you stop, the horse stops, the music stops, I stop; but there's one thing that nobody can stop."

"What is the one thing nobody can stop?" inquired the ringmaster.

"Why, a woman's tongue!"

The ringmaster, in apparent retaliatory discomfiture, cracked his whip at the legs of the clown, who uttered "Ouch!" as if in pain, and the crowd laughed.

"What can I do for you, mademoiselle?" asked the ringmaster politely.

Bessie made her request, the article was handed to her by the clown, then the band started up and they were off once more. In an instant the great audience seemed to vanish from before Nick as the horses increased their speed to a mad pace under the cracking of the ringmas-

ter's whip and the increasing fortissimo and speed of the band.

"Hoop-la!" cried Bessie, excitedly, as the act drew near to its exciting termination.

Nick straddled the two whirling horses—a foot on each one—and seized her tightly by the waistband. Then she raised one foot to the boy's hip and sprang into the air, bending forward in the attitude of a flying Mercury. Around the ring they went as fast as the excited animals could race, amid a pandemonium of noise and melody, the great audience going wild with enthusiasm.

Nick's breath came thick and fast, and his eyes blazed with a fierce excitement. He lost all track of time and space for the moment, and Bessie had to cry "Jump!" before he realized the finish was at hand. She dropped lightly to her horse's back, and both sprang to the sawdust as the band came to a sudden stop. They bowed and retired amid deafening applause.

CHAPTER VIII.—In Which Our Hero Performs A Heroic Deed.

Three years have passed away since Nick Long slipped away from the Bagley farm that bright July afternoon and joined the Great Occidental Circus at Brentville. He is now nearly eighteen years of age, tall, finely formed and handsome. This is his third year with the Great Occidental, which has now risen to the dignity of a three-ring show and travels by rail instead of wagon, as it did of yore. The reader will therefore understand that there is a vast difference between the Great Occidental to-day and what it was when Nick Long, now widely known as Hector de Vronde, joined his fortunes to it as an humble assistant to the candy-butchers.

Hiram Hanks and Andy Tooker still run the candy and other toothsome privileges, and Mr. Hanks is never tired of telling how he introduced to the circus world the famous bareback rider, Hector de Vronde, the star in his line of the present show. Bessie Abbott, now a lovely girl verging on sixteen years, and her father, with his Nubian lion, the Rajah, are also with the Great Occidental this year, but there is scarcely another face familiar to the old wagon show.

It was the fifth day of August. The Great Occidental Circus had arrived early that morning at Zanesville, Ohio, had given its daily parade, and the performers were in the dressing-rooms preparing for the afternoon performance. The people attached to the show no longer patronized the hotels for their meals, for a "cook tent," one of the marvels of the modern circus, catered to their appetites right on the lot. As the "cook tents" were the first to be raised in the morning, so they were the first to be leveled and packed away on the cars at night. The last meal of the day was served at five o'clock in the afternoon, and two hours later there was no perceptible trace of the improvised restaurant save the coals which glowed in the twilight.

Neither did the circus people sleep as best they might in the traveling vehicles formerly provided for that purpose. Two sleeping cars now carried performers and business staff in the first section, known as the "baggage train," which also

bore the paraphernalia necessary to the immediate wants of the encampment. The second train carried the elephants, camels and their keepers, performing, ring and baggage horses, seat and stringer wagons, "property" wagons and all the appliances for the performers and their baggage. The third train carried more sleeping cars and all the cages.

But to return to our story. The "big top," which covered an immense oblong space enclosing the three rings, was rapidly filling with spectators for the afternoon show, and the performers were nearly all dressed and ready for the "grand entree," when a terrible roar, a resounding crash, followed almost immediately by a thrilling scream from a woman's lips, echoed through the canvas structure and startled performance and spectator's alike. Almost immediately there followed a chorus of feminine shrieks and men's voices raised in alarm, as the crowd of visitors in the menagerie tent made a wild stampede to escape from the place.

A number of the male performers rushed for the menagerie tent, and as the foremost of them swept the canvas covering aside a fearful sight met their gaze. Rajah, the big Nubian lion and one of the great attractions of the show, had broken from his cage, struck down his trainer, George Abbott (Signor Alto on the bills), and now stood above his body, glaring down at the unconscious man, while he lashed the air savagely with his ponderous tufted tail.

At this thrilling moment, when it seemed that the fate of the lion's owner was surely sealed, a stalwart young athlete, in pink fleshings and dark-blue trunks, appeared upon the scene. It was Nick Long, the champion bareback rider of the Great Occidental Show. Taking in the situation at a glance, he looked hurriedly around for a serviceable weapon to meet the situation with.

A yard away stood a tinsmith's heater, with a big soldering iron thrust among the live coals. The boy seized the glowing iron and, boldly approaching the monarch of the forest, thrust the heated point within half an inch of his nose. The lion sprang back with a smothered growl and seemed as if about to spring upon his aggressor; but the lad, undaunted by the peril he was facing, followed up his first advantage and literally drove Rajah back to his cage. Several attendants now rushed up with long poles armed with iron points, with which they proposed to attack the lion; but such a proceeding was no longer necessary, for Rajah seemed to have been thoroughly cowed by Nick Long's vigorous and courageous action.

The broken door of the cage was hastily repaired by a couple of the blacksmith's assistants, the men with the poles standing ready to keep the lion off if he exhibited a tendency to interfere with the work. In the meantime the general manager of the show had come upon the spot and was informed of all that had occurred. He sent the equestrian director and the several ring-masters into the rings to address and reassure the public. Then he pushed his way through the group of performers who had crowded about the unfortunate George Abbott, now coming to his senses under the combined efforts of his daughter and Nick Long.

"How is Abbott?" he asked. "Not badly hurt, I hope?"

"His right arm seems to be broken, sir," replied Nick.

"Have you sent for a physician?"

"Yes, sir."

"From what I hear, Long, you performed a nervy act . . . Your presence of mind under such startling conditions is much to be commended. If that beast had got out among the spectators, good heavens! the result would have been deplorable. I thank you in the name of the proprietors of the show, and I will see that your gallant conduct is properly represented to them."

"Well, I did the best I could under the circumstances, Mr. Sheldon," replied Nick, modestly.

At this point the doctor arrived and took the injured lion trainer in hand. He found that the man's left arm was broken near the shoulder and that he received a severe blow on the head from the animal's paw, though the scalp showed little signs of injury. He set the broken arm and ordered that Abbott be removed to his berth in the sleeping car. His directions were carried out as the performers, including Bessie, his daughter, and Nick Long, to whom he owed his life, scattered to take their places in the grand entree.

CHAPTER IX.—Our Hero Receives A Munificent Reward.

"Nick, you dear, good boy! How shall I ever thank you enough for saving my dear father's life?" said Bessie, tears of gratitude shining in her lovely brown eyes.

"Don't mention it, Bessie. I'm only too happy to know that I was able to do your father a service."

It wanted a few minutes of five o'clock. The two had met on the way from their dressing-room to the eating tent. As it happened, this was the first opportunity they had had of exchanging a word since the beginning of the afternoon performance.

"I am sure you believe I am very grateful to you, Nick," she continued, earnestly.

"I know you are, Bessie, so don't say another word about it."

"Oh, but I will," she cried, with girlish persistency.

"You always will have your own way," he laughed, looking a bit tenderly at the pretty equestrienne. "You've managed to boss me about ever since the day I made my first appearance in the ring, with you as the bright particular star."

"What nonsense!" she cried, with a little blush. "Just as if I could!"

"Oh, you do it all right," he replied, nodding his head a contented sort of way, as if to imply that he rather relished the air of proprietorship she exercised over him. "Well, I haven't any kick coming, Bessie. You're made me what I am."

"What a ridiculous assertion, Nick! You are the champion bareback rider of the show, while I—I'm only the same Mademoiselle Celestine. Just a little bit older, you know, and consequently less interesting."

"You never can be less interesting to me, Bessie," he said, gravely and earnestly.

"Oh, Nick! You are very good to say that, but—"

She drooped her head and blushed.

"But what, little girl? There's no buts in this thing at all. I'm sure if it hadn't been for your advice and encouragement I'd never have amounted to shucks as a rider."

"You know that isn't so, Nick. If you hadn't had the thing in you I never could have helped you even a tiny, weeny bit."

"Are you glad your father refused the offer to go out with 'The Greatest Show on Earth?' He'd have taken you with him, of course, and then—"

"Yes. I'd rather be with the Great Occidental."

"Would you? Why?" eagerly.

"Because I've always been with it since it was a single-ring wagon show, and it's like an old friend."

"Is that the only reason?" with a shade of disappointment in his voice.

"Isn't that a good reason?" in surprise.

"Yes. It's a good reason all right. Only I thought—"

"What?"

"Oh, nothing. It doesn't matter. Let's go in and eat," and he started ahead.

Bessie looked at him and then laid a detaining grasp on his arm.

"Now, what were you going to say? I want to know."

"It wouldn't interest you," he replied, without any life in his words.

"Why do you think so?" she persisted.

"Oh, because—" he blurted out, and then he stopped.

"Because what? That's only a woman's reason."

"Well," he replied, desperately, "what I was going to say is: I thought perhaps the reason why you were glad your father decided to stay with the Great Occidental was because we—you and I, you know—would be together with the same show. But of course—"

"Why, you silly boy!" she answered, with heightened color. "You know I'm glad we're in the same show. I couldn't get along without you."

"Why not? We each do our own turn these days. So far as you are concerned, I don't count any more."

"Don't be foolish. You always count—with me."

She flashed him a look that sent his blood racing through his veins, and then she darted into the tent, for they didn't sit at the same table.

"I wonder if she meant that?" Nick asked himself, with a little thrill of joy. "Dear Bessie! I don't think I'd have the heart to work if she wasn't with us. I'm glad I was on hand to help her father to-day—he had a close call of it. Maybe—"

He didn't get any further, for a hand was laid on his shoulder at that moment and the cheery voice of a brother performer came to his ears.

"Hello, old chap. What's the matter with you? Aren't you going to eat?"

"Sure thing," he replied, as he recognized one of the star acrobats. "Let's go inside."

After the evening meal the performers had a couple of hours to themselves. Bessie decided to utilize the time by visiting her father, as she was anxious to know how he was getting along. The railroad yard was not a great distance away, so when she came out of the eating tent she waited till Nick made his appearance, when she went up to him and proposed that he accompany her. Of course he was delighted to do so. She hurried off to get her hat, a little gypsy straw, in which the boy said she looked real cute, and together they left the lot. They found George Abbott propped up in his bunk in the sleeper. His arm pained him a good deal, and he said his head didn't feel just right after the blow the lion had given him.

"I havn't forgot what you did for me, my lad," he said, earnestly, to Nick. "One of the men told me how you drove the lion off me and back into his cage with a hot soldering iron. It was a daring thing for you to do. It's a wonder Rajah stood for it. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he'd have laid you out like a pancake and chewed you up."

Bessie shuddered and laid her hand upon Nick's arm as her father spoke. Not until this moment had she realized the full extent of the peril which the brave boy had faced. She recalled now the innate ferocity of the Nubian beast, which long captivity had scarcely subdued. Her father was the only one the animal seemed to fear, and there had been times when the beast, in a moment of sullen anger, had even turned upon him, and for minutes his life had trembled in the balance.

"Well, Mr. Abbott," replied Nick, cheerfully. "I suppose he was more or less dazed at finding himself outside of his cage, and, as I took him quick, before he had recovered himself, I guess that's why I came off first best."

"You've figured the thing out correctly. The management has cause to be truly thankful to you."

The Zanesville evening papers gave considerable space to the lion episode, and all praised the courage and presence of mind of the famous bareback rider, Hector de Vronde. The story was telegraphed all over the country by the Associated Press, and an item detailing the facts were printed in nearly every morning paper. It also appeared in condensed form in the New York "Clipper," and as a result every circus man in the United States read and commented upon it.

Next day the show was in Freeport. The lion incident had been judiciously advertised so as to attract public attention to the hero of the occasion, and that afternoon the immense tent was crammed to suffocation, every man, woman and child of whom awaited with feverish interest the appearance in the ring of the great bareback rider—Hector de Vronde. Needless to say he received an ovation second only to the one he had received the previous evening in Zanesville. That day was pay-day for the performers (on Wednesdays, during the afternoon show, the long line of workmen received their weekly wages), and they lined up before the pay wagon between the afternoon and evening performances. When

Nick was handed his envelope he was told that the general manager wanted to see him.

"Mr. Long," said the general manager, in a genial voice, "I have sent for you to express to you the deep sense of obligation the management feel under to you for your praise-worthy action yesterday afternoon in Zanesville when the lion escaped from his cage. There is little doubt but your prompt and effective way—all the more commendable because adopted on the spur of the moment—of coming to the rescue at such a critical moment prevented a lamentable panic, which could only have resulted disastrously to the proprietors of this show. The management therefore feel that you deserve some substantial evidence of their gratitude for the service you have rendered them, so I have been instructed by Mr. Jackman here to present you with the company's check for the sum of one thousand dollars."

Nick was certainly taken by surprise, for he had not expected to be rewarded for what he had done, unless it was with the smiles and grateful appreciation of pretty Bessie Abbott, which was more to him than all the money in the world. He accepted the check, however, as such a thing as a refusal to do so would have both surprised and offended the nabobs of the show, and thanked the general manager and Mr. Jackman in a somewhat confused way. Then the very first thing he did was to run off and show it to Bessie, who congratulated him with sparkling eyes.

CHAPTER X.—Our Hero Has An Unexpected Meeting With Luke Bagley.

Next day was Sunday, the circus man's day of rest and relaxation. The start from the Saturday stand is always made the same night, and the Sabbath respite is improved for long railroad runs. The route is so planned in advance that on no one night, except Saturday, is the journey so long that, everything favorable, there will be tardy arrival. The usual run is eighty to ninety miles; the trips of one hundred and fifty and two hundred miles are reserved for Saturday night. Therefore when Nick, who was still a comparatively early riser for a professional, tumbled out of his bunk in the sleeper, he found the train still on the move, with the prospect of several more hours in the cramped quarters of the car.

Knowing from past experience that the resources of the train restaurant would be sorely taxed, for circus appetites are voracious in the morning, he had prudently laid in a supply of fruit and food the night before, and placing a chair upon the car platform, for the day was warm and sunny, he proceeded to make the best of the situation. Nick passed a whole hour in solitary contemplation of the shifting landscape, smiling under the morning sun, before any of his companions made their appearance. He often thought of Allan Ramsay, who had initiated him into the business, and incidentally pocketed seven-eights of a six week's salary, and subsequently one-half of the following season's pay, in return for certain expenditure of time and patience at the company's winter quarters. Nick never kick-

ed, for the young man had practically made an artist of him.

Now Ramsay was with the "Greatest Show on Earth," and the boy at rare intervals received a letter from him. Nick's new chum was Arthur Dale, an aerial artist, one of a trio called the "Rinaldo Family"—two men and a woman—whose "fymnic gyrations, swallow-like sweeps, swings and somersaults, altitudinous ascensions and far flights" (according to the press agent) "kept the dizzy heights of the canvas dome alive with activity. Arthur was a clever young fellow of about Nick's own age, and the two were warm friends. He was the second performer to turn out on this Sunday morning, and he came out on the platform as the train slowed down at a wayside station for the engine to take water.

"How long have you been up, old man?" he inquired.

"Oh, about an hour," replied Nick, carelessly.

"I hate the morning," remarked Dale. "I'm always as stiff as a piece of new leather. Let's get off—I see the train has come to a stop. I want to stretch my limbs."

"Same here," said Nick, leaping to the ground. His companion stepped down with painful slowness.

"Funny, isn't it, we're always this way the morning after the show?" he said.

"That's right. You can always tell a performer from a workingman by the way he gets off the car. I wonder what village that is yonder?"

"Don't ask me, Nick," answered Dale. "Better inquire of the station agent, if he's about, if you want to know real bad."

Nick hadn't any great curiosity on the subject, and besides, the station agent was in bed asleep at that moment. There was a big, freckle-faced boy standing on the platform, however, who was gaping with all eyes at the circus train. His face seemed to be familiar to Nick as he drew near to him, and he looked at him narrowly, but couldn't place him. Suddenly the boy turned and looked him squarely in the face. His mouth opened and his protruding eyes opened wider. Like a flash Nick recognized him.

"Luke Bagley, is that you?"

"Nick Long!"

"Right you are, Luke. What are you doing out this way? How are things around Salem, eh?"

"Dunno. We don't live at Salem no more."

"No?" in some surprise.

"No. Dad sold out and come here. We're keepin' a store."

"In the village yonder?"

Luke Bagley nodded.

"Say, what did you run away from us for?" he asked, in some little excitement. "And where have you been all this time?"

"I guess you know why I ran away. Your father threatened to give me the whipping of my life, tied me up to a post in the barn to make sure I shouldn't get away, and I concluded not to stand for it, so I made tracks for Brentville."

"Well, you made the mistake of your life by doin' it," replied Luke, with a grin.

you'd better come along with me and see the old man. You can go to Peoria by another train."

"Couldn't think of it, Luke."

"You don't know what you're missin', Nick Long."

"Come, now, what are you driving at?"

"The old man will tell you if you go and see him."

"It's very important, I suppose," laughed Dick.

"I guess you'll find it so," nodded Luke.

"Well, as you seem to know a good deal about it, why don't you put me wise to it? The train will be going in a minute."

"You've got to see the old man. He knows all the particulars. What I could tell you wouldn't do you no good."

T-oo-t! T-oo-t! Two screeches from the locomotive warned Nick and others belonging to the train who had got off that the engineer was on the point of starting up again.

"Well, I'm off, Luke. If you people have anything important to tell me you can write me care of the Great Occidental Show, per route: Peoria, Lincoln, Pontiac, Bloomington, Danville, Lafayette. We show in those towns next week. Good-by."

Nick made a dash for the already moving train, which Arthur Dale had boarded, took a flying leap for the platform of the sleeper and sat down in his chair. Luke watched the train till it rounded a curve and disappeared, then he started post-haste for home to tell his father and mother that he had just met Nick Long and that he was with the Great Occidental Circus.

CHAPTER XI.—Nick and Bessie Enact the Chief Characters In Love's Young Dream.

* Within an hour the train arrived at Peoria, and the other sections followed in close order. Few of the performers or staff members went to the lot for Sunday meals, although the eating tent awaited their presence. They registered at the local hotels and spent much of their time in writing and reading. At the lot the scene was one of peace and quiet. The canvas of the "big" and other "tops," which had not been elevated, lay passive on the ground, ready for the men to haul them aloft at sunrise. Nick and Bessie generally spent the day in each other's company, either at the cars or walking about town, according to weather conditions. Nick and Arthur Dale, in company with one or two other performers, walked out to the lot, which was on the suburbs, and then took a trolley ride to a small adjacent town and back.

On their return Arthur and the other proceeded to a well-known hotel to take dinner, while Nick kept on to the railroad yard to meet Bessie and dine with her at a big restaurant a few blocks distant. As he approached he saw Bessie, with her hat on, leaning from the platform of her car. Though some distance off, he signaled her with his hand, for he guessed she was on the lookout for him. She answered him, jumped to the ground and started to walk toward him.

At that moment a gymnast named Jackson Parke, who had been somewhat attentive to Bessie on the sly, suddenly appeared around the corner of an empty freight car and confronted her. Bessie didn't like Jackson Parke and tried to avoid him, but was not successful.

"Don't be so coy, Miss Abbott," said Parke,

with a smirk that was habitual with him. "You might permit me the pleasure of a few words with you."

Parke was a good-looking fellow and thought himself irresistible with the ladies.

"You'll have to excuse me, Mr. Parke," answered Bessie, whose manner toward him was not encouraging.

"Why, what's your hurry?" he asked, barring her progress.

"I've got an engagement," she replied, coldly.

"It will keep a little while, I guess," he said, coolly.

"Will you please let me pass?"

"Certainly, after you've honored me with your presence for a few moments," he answered, with an irritating smile.

"But I've got no time to talk with you, Mr. Parke," persisted Bessie, feeling greatly provoked.

"Oh, but you can make a little time, you know. I haven't had a word with you for three days, and that isn't fair."

"If you are a gentleman, Mr. Parke, you will not detain me," cried Bessie, angrily, making another futile effort to get by.

"Why of course I'm a gentleman," he said, twirling his small black mustache. "Come now, be reasonable, Miss Bessie. I was going to ask you to take dinner with me. Will you honor me?"

"No, sir."

She gave it to him straight from the shoulder, for she was very indignant over his conduct.

"Why not?"

"I wish you'd leave me alone, Mr. Parke. If you don't—"

"Well, if I don't, what then?" he laughed, tantalizingly.

"I'll have to appeal to Mr. Long."

"Indeed!" with a sneer. "I have no use for Mr. Long whatever."

"Thank you, Mr. Parke," said Nick, who overheard the remark as he stepped up. "It is quite mutual."

Jackson Parke swung around on his heel and faced the young equestrian, whose approach he had not heard.

"What do you mean by that?" he demanded, aggressively.

"Nothing more than you meant by your remark, Mr. Parke," replied Nick, with mock politeness.

"What do you mean by stealing up behind me in that way?" angrily.

"I wasn't aware that I stole up behind you. If you hadn't been so deeply engaged with Miss Abbott you might easily have heard my footsteps."

"I don't care to talk with you, Nick Long."

"You're not obliged to, Mr. Parke. Come, Bessie; we'll run along, if you say so."

She quickly brushed by the handsome acrobat, joined Nick, and then, without another word to Jackson Parke, they walked off up the railroad tracks.

"I'm so glad you came just when you did, Nick," she said, earnestly.

"Yes, indeed. He wouldn't let me by."

"Why not?"

"He insisted that I should stop and speak to him."

"Oh, did he?" laughed Nick.

"Yes. And he had the cheek to ask me to go to dinner with him," cried Bessie, indignantly.

"You didn't seem to appreciate the honor very much," he grinned, cheerfully, for he was rather tickled than otherwise to see Jackson Parke taken down a peg.

"Honor! Indeed!" with a toss of her pretty head.

"Of course you couldn't accept, for you had already promised to go with me."

"Just as if I'd go with him, anyway. I don't like him one bit."

"And he's such a handsome fellow, too."

"Aren't you just too provoking, Nick Long!" flashing a saucy look in his face.

"Am I? Well, I've got to get back at you once in a while."

"Get back at me! What do you mean?"

"Well, you know you put it all over me every once in a while, when you happen to be in the mood. Come, now, own up."

"I don't know what you're talking about," she replied, with a pout.

"Don't you know that you tease the very life out of me sometimes?"

"Do I?"

"Yes, you do. Whenever I'm in earnest with you that's the time you roast me."

"The idea! I didn't think you were ever in earnest about anything except your work."

"Well, I'm in earnest about another thing."

"And what is it, pray?" with a sly glance in his face.

"Haven't you the least idea?"

"Why, of course not," roguishly.

"Do you want me to tell you real bad?"

"If you like."

"I have tried to tell you a dozen times, but you always sidetrack me."

"Nonsense!"

"Bessie," he said, taking the bull by the horns, "do you like me well enough to promise to be my wife some day?"

That was coming to the point with a vengeance, and the girl blushed a deep crimson and looked down on the ground.

"I want an answer, Bessie. I love the very ground you walk on, and this suspense is wearing on the nerves. Do you care for me as I want you to? Will you marry me one of these days? What is it, dear—yes or not?"

"Yes," she answered, in a low, sweet tone.

"Bessie, you've made me very, very happy."

"Have I? Then I am very, very glad."

And so it was that, in spite of the fact that if there is one thing frowned upon more than all others in tented life it is adventures of the heart, the seeds of love sowed three years before, when Nick and Bessie made their triumphal appearance in the next act, "The Flight of Venus and Adonis," sprouted gloriously in Illinois, with the prospect of a golden harvest in the near future.

CHAPTER XII.—Luke Bagley Receives the Circus' Third Degree.

Nick Long, or Hector de Vronde, as he was called in the bills, was the most brilliant and

daring bareback rider in the Great Occidental Show, and under his skilful coaching Bessie Abbott, or Mlle. Clestine, eclipsed all the lady riders this season. She was now able to turn back somersaults from the broad, rosined haunch of her milk-white horse, Esmeralda. Both she and Nick owned their own animals, which they had trained down to a fine point. Nick's was a splendid jet-black stallion, with a white star in his forehead, who answered to the name of Dandy. It is easy to believe that Nick and Bessie were uncommonly fond of their animals. The sharp little vibrant "clucks" with which Bessie commanded Esmeralda in the ring were "cues" which the animal understood as well she did the swaying of the ringmaster's whip from left to right or the pressure of the rider's satin slipper.

On Monday morning, after the parade was over, an attache of the circus hunted up Nick Long and told him that a very persistent young man, with sandy hair and bulging eyes, wanted to see him, and wouldn't take "no" for an answer. Of course Nick immediately recognized this person as Luke Bagley, and it annoyed him not a little to find that Luke was following him up.

"Where is he?" he asked of the attendant.

"Outside, back of the menagerie tent."

"All right. I'll see what he wants."

Accordingly Nick strolled around to the indicated spot just as soon as he had got into his every-day clothes.

"Hello, Nick," exclaimed Luke, in a familiar tone. "I've come."

"I see you have," replied the equestrian, not over cordially.

"I told ma and the old man that I'd seen you, and dad is comin' over to the show to-night to have a talk with you."

"He is?" cried Nick, not at all pleased at this piece of news, as he had no wish to meet Mr. Bagley, for whom he only cherished unpleasant recollections.

"Yes," replied Luke, nodding his shock head vigorously.

"I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint him," said Nick.

"I wouldn't if I was you," answered Luke, with a meaning leer.

"It is one of the rules of the circus that none of the performers are permitted to leave the tent until the show is over."

"Then he'll wait till the show is over."

"Say, Luke, can't you tell me what your father wants to see me for?"

"Nope."

"Why not?" impatiently.

"He told me not to open my face to you," grinned Luke, who prided himself on the amount of slang he used.

"Very well, then, I won't see him."

"You'll be sorry, all right, if you don't."

"Oh, cut it out, Luke. You sang that song in several keys yesterday morning. I'm sick of hearing it," said Nick, in a tone of disgust.

"All right, Nick. It's your funeral, not mine. Now, let's talk of somethin' else."

"Well, make it short and to the point. I'm going to dinner."

"Where do you eat? At a hotel?"

"No. In a long tent on the other side of the big top."

"What do you call the big top?" asked Luke, who was unfamiliar with circus terms.

"The main tent, or auditorium, which covers the three rings."

"Oh!" ejaculated Luke, feeling much enlightened. "You call that the big top. Well, it's big enough, all right. You must occupy a ten-acre lot here."

"About that. Anything of less area would mean cramped quarters."

"Well, see here, Nick. I've come over to join this circus, and I want you to introduce me to the boss and put in a good word for me."

"Is that all you want me to do, Luke?" asked Nick, sarcastically, amazed at the nerve of his old tyrant.

"If you can do any more I shan't forget it when pay-day comes around," grinned young Bagley, condescendingly.

"Thanks. There's nothing mean about you, is there, Luke?"

"Not on your tintype, there isn't. If you'll go over to the corner grocery yonder, I'll blow you off now."

This was an uncommunly generous offer on Luke's part, and quite a safe one, as the people attached to a circus are not permitted under any circumstances to indulge in stimulants.

"I thought I told you yesterday morning that we had no opening for new people," said Nick, ignoring Luke's bibulous invitation.

"I know you did, but I thought maybe you was foolin'," returned the aspirant.

"I wasn't fooling. I stated the fact."

"You have such a lot of people that one more can't make much difference to the boss. Circuses coin money, you know."

Evidently Luke Bagley was laboring under a popular misapprehension regarding the profits of the circus business. As a matter of fact, some of the large organization have continued in existence for periods of several years without returning a cent on the investment, or at an actual operating loss. The daily expenses of the Great Occidental Show were placed by the management at over four thousand dollars. When it is stated that the daily average free admissions, largely tickets given for bill-posting privileges, amounted to about one thousand, and that one-quarter of the attendance comprised children under nine years of age, and who paid the half rate, i. e., 25 cents, it will be seen that some eleven thousand persons, including those with free tickets, had to pass the door each day before a dollar's profit had been yielded from this source for the management.

The Great Occidental's "big top" capacity was eight thousand five hundred persons, or seventeen thousand for the two daily shows, and it was not an uncommon thing for the net revenue to be supplied entirely by side-shows, peanuts, popcorn, lemonade and other small departments.

"You seem to know all about it, Luke," replied Nick, coldly.

"Sure I do," in a confident tone. "Now, I want you to introduce me to the boss of the shebang."

Nick was on the point of curtly refusing his request, when a brilliant plan of getting rid of his persevering visitor occurred to him. It had

been worked before, and there was no reason why it wouldn't be just as effective with Luke Bagley.

"I can't introduce you to the proprietor, Luke, but I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll turn you over to the head clown and let him pass upon you."

"All right," replied the gullible Luke, quite delighted at the offer.

"Come with me," said Nick, and Luke followed him around to the other side of the big top. "Wait round here till dinner is over and I'll do what I can for you."

Luke agreed to wait, and then Nick, with a suppressed grin, went in to the midday meal. Dan Leno was the name of the head clown of the Great Occidental Show, and Nick sought him out and told him he had a very persistent applicant for a circus job on his hands, a boy who once upon a time had lorded it over him to the top of his bent, and he asked the clown if he would take his former tyrant in hand.

"Sure I will," chuckled Leno, with alacrity. "Where is he?"

"Come with me and I'll introduce you to him."

Nick easily found Luke hovering around the appointed rendezvous.

"This is Mr. Leno, our head clown, Luke. Mr. Leno, Luke Bagley,"

"So you want to join the circus, do you, my lad?" asked the clown, with a twinkle in his eye.

"That's what I do," replied Luke, airily.

"Well, come with me and I'll see what's in you."

Luke was escorted with great deference to the men's dressing-room, received by the performers, most of whom had received the tip, with keen anticipatory delight, and ostentatiously welcomed in their ranks.

"You will have to begin your career as a laugh-provoker," explained Leno, "as that is the only vacancy we have at present."

Luke was tickled to death at the idea of making his debut as one of the clowns.

"Get into these," ordered Dan, producing a suit of tights.

Luke undressed and assumed the fleshings. An old, grotesque, loose dress was handed to him, and he was requested to put it on. His hair was filled with powdered sawdust, his face was daubed with chalk and dye-stuffs, and then Leno ordered him into the nearest ring. There the ringmaster, prepared to do his part, awaited him. Luke soon felt the sharp lash of the whip upon his legs, and was put through a course of sprouts that took all desire for a circus life out of him. He finally left the dressing-room a sadder if not a wiser boy, and so disgusted was he that he didn't attend either the afternoon or evening show, as had been his intention.

CHAPTER XIII.—Our Hero Overhears A Plot Against His Horse, Dandy.

A cloudy morning greeted the arrival of the Great Occidental Show in Lincoln, Ill., and the chances of a disagreeable rain before the day was over looked good. There is nothing like a spell of rainy weather to breed a feeling of despair in a showman, but it is inevitable that sometimes rain and mud and wind be encountered.

So prepared was the Great Occidental for exigencies that nothing short of a flood would prevent unloading and the presentation of some sort of exhibition. During the parade the sky grew darker and darker, and the prospect less favorable for a big crowd, but still no rain fell, which was fortunate for the lightly clad performers, as well as for the gaudy trappings and gilded vehicles. Everything and everybody returned to the low without mishap. Then the people began to hustle into their regular togs to go to dinner.

The clouds lowered over the landscape, a twilight air brooded upon the face of nature, and it soon began to rain. Nick was seized with a sudden desire to enter the deserted menagerie tent and take a look at Rajah, the Nubian lion, in his ponderous cage. He had a curiosity to see whether the beast was much affected by the change in the weather. While standing in the shadow of an adjacent cage he heard two persons enter the tent and stop within a few feet of him. He recognized them immediately by their voices. One was Jackson Parke and the other the stud groom to whom he confided the care of his brilliant and intelligent stallion, Dandy.

"Now I'll talk to you, Bickett," said Jackson Parke. "There's no one here, consequently we can converse without fear of being overheard. You say Long hauled you over the coals because he caught you with a small flask of brandy in your possession?"

"Yes. And he threatened to report me to the management if the thing occurred again, curse him!" cried Bickett, angrily.

"Well, are you going to stand for that? From a mere boy, too?" remarked Parke, in a taunting tone.

"What can I do? He's got me dead. If he reported me to the general manager my name would be Tim Flynn in no time."

"What can you do? Why, get back at him, of course."

"I would in a minute if I only knew how," grated the groom.

"Do you mean that?" asked Jackson Parke, eagerly.

"I do, so help me bob!" hissed Bickett, his features working convulsively.

"S'posing I show you a way?"

"Say, Mr. Parke what are you tryin' to do? Draw me out, and then—"

"And then what?"

"Give me away? If I thought so, I'd—"

"Well, what would you do?" asked the acrobat, coolly.

"I'd make you curse the day you were born," glared the groom.

"Look here, Bickett, I'm not trying to do you. Why should I? On the contrary, I want to put you in the way of getting square with Nick Long."

"Why?" asked the groom, suspiciously.

"Why! 'Cause I hate the fellow as you do, if not worse!" cried Parke, and, judging by the tone of his voice, he meant it.

"Why do you hate him? What have you ag'in him?"

"He's cut me out with the girl I'd give a year's sal. to win."

"You mean Bessie Abbott, don't you?" grinned the groom."

"I do."

"You'll never get the inside track with her while Long's around."

"I know it. That's why I want to do him."

"How can you? If I knew of a safe way, I'd—"

"Try it, eh?"

"I would."

"Listen to me, then. I can show you a way that'll cut him to the quick."

"You can?" hoarsely.

"I can."

"And is it safe?"

"Perfectly."

"What is it?"

"My scheme is to strike him through his horse."

"Through his horse?"

"Yes. He thinks the world of the animal."

"I don't wonder. He's a dandy, both by name and education. I ought to know, for I handle him."

"That's just it. I can't reach him, but you can."

"What's your little game?"

Jackson Parke put his hand in his pocket and drew out a good-sized pillbox. Taking off the cover, he said:

"Do you see that?"

"I do. It's a bolus, isn't it?"

"Yes. I want you to put that into his mouth this afternoon just before you lead him into the ring."

"What will it do to him?"

Ten minutes or less after taking it the horse will drop in his tracks; Nick Long will be pitched over his head, and if he escapes without a broken neck I shall be surprised. In any case, the horse Dandy will be out of business for good."

"Dead!" gasped the groom.

"As a coffin-nail," with a mirthless laugh. "I'll give you fifty dollars spot cash to turn the trick."

"It's too risky," breathed the groom.

"No risk at all."

"How do you make that out?"

"In case of a post-mortem examination nothing will be found to show that he was given this bolus."

"No."

"Why not?"

"It dissolves almost immediately through his blood. The symptoms are heart disease."

"How can you tell that?"

"I've had proof of it."

"I wish I was sure of that."

"You've got to take my word for it, Bickett; but I swear to you what I am telling you is the truth."

The groom scratched his head and hesitated.

"If this thing should happen to go wrong, you know what would happen to me," he said, nervously.

"It needn't go wrong if you've the sand to put it through right."

Still the groom hesitated. It was a mighty risky thing for him to undertake.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Jackson Parke. "I hate the fellow so much that I'll raise the ante to seventy-five dollars, but you'll have to wait till Saturday for the other twenty-five dollars."

The fifty per cent. raise in the price of the

bit of villainy turned the scale in the acrobat's favor.

"Give me the box. I'll chance it," said Bickett, with an evil glitter in his eye. "I hate to hurt the horse, but as there's no other way—"

"That's the only chance you have to reach Long. Whether he's hurt or not, it will queer his act for him to lose Dandy, and it will break his heart into the bargain."

"Blame him!" muttered the groom. "I'd rather see him break his neck."

"Let us hope he will," replied Jackson Parke, with a little evil laugh. "Now I'm going in to dinner. Heaven, how it rains! And how dark it is in these tents! You couldn't ask for a better day to do the job. No one will see you put that pill into Dandy's mouth."

"I hope not," retorted the groom, as they both walked out of the menagerie tent.

For a moment Nick Long, who had overheard every word of the scoundrelly deal between the acrobat and Bickett, stood as if turned to stone, so paralyzed was he at the conspiracy against him and his noble animal, Dandy.

"Good heavens!" he gasped at last. "What a pair of villains! And to think I've always treated Bickett in a particularly friendly way, and this is the way he turns on me because I stopped him from boozing on the quiet. I knew if the general manager heard that he carried a flask in his pocket he would have been thrown out of the lot in short order, and I didn't want to lose his services, as he seems to understand Dandy and the animal likes him. But, good gracious! This is the limit! I must find Mr. Sheldon on once and lay the case before him. That scoundrel Parke certainly hit on a plan that, were it successful, would have hurt me more than anything I know of short of the loss of Bessie herself. How any man could find it in his conscience to deliberately plan the murder of an innocent horse gets me. But it looks as if some people didn't possess such a thing as a conscience."

With this reflection, Nick also left the menagerie tent and went in quest of the general manager of the show.

CHAPTER XIV.—Jackson Parke Retires Forever From the Ring.

The weather cleared up during the dinner hour and the prospects were brighter for a good afternoon crowd. The electric cars passing by and in the neighborhood of the lot soon began to empty themselves of a horde of passengers who had been packed inside like sardines in their box, and the stream of eager circus patrons headed for the show ground and surged around the ticket wagons like breakers beating against a big rock along shore. This was a satisfactory condition of affairs to Mr. Sheldon, the general manager of the show, who was much in evidence in the hurry and excitement at the main entrance, but for all that a frown, not usual with him, rested on his face.

The grave responsibilities of the circus were his, and he was a man well fitted for the position, requiring peculiar natural talents, wide experience, knowledge of law and logic and fa-

miliarity with affairs in general. The hundred-and-one little annoyances with which he was continually beset never outwardly disturbed him, therefore those attaches who noticed his face this afternoon were satisfied that something out of the ordinary had occurred to ruffle the feelings of the general manager. And so there had. Nick Long had interviewed him, and the story he told roused Mr. Sheldon's astonishment and ire as few other matters connected with the show would have done. Although the information conveyed to him by the bright boy seemed incredible, still the general manager believed him; at any rate, he wasn't going to take any chances.

"Don't worry about Dandy," he said, as he saw the trace of tears in the boy's eyes. "I'll see that nothing happens to your horse. I'm only sorry you have no corroboratory evidence against these men. Never mind. It is my purpose to catch Bickett in the act, if possible, with the poisoned pill in his possession, and then I'll force a confession from him that will probably implicate Mr. Parke enough to cause his sudden retirement from the show."

Nick Long was dressed and almost ready for his act in the middle ring, when Arthur Dale stepped up to him and put his hand on his shoulder.

"What's troubling you, Nick?" he asked, kindly.

"Oh, nothing. What would trouble me?" he answered, with a little nervous laugh.

"Come, now, old fellow, you can't stand me off in that way. I know something is the matter with you."

"What makes you think so?"

"You show it in your face. I saw Parke looking at you a moment ago in a strange kind of way, and two or three of the people called my attention to it."

"Pshaw!" cried Nick, with an impatience that was new to him. "Cut it out. I'm all right."

"You're not all right, and you can't make me believe that you are. For heaven's sake, man! you can't afford to lose your nerve just before that act of yours. You need every ounce of it. If you're not well, you'd better see the director. Don't take any chances of a broken neck."

"Who's speaking about a broken neck?" said a voice behind them, and a sibilant laugh sounded in their ears.

Dick started as if he had received a shock from a powerful galvanic battery. He turned squarely around and faced Jackson Parke, whose handsome countenance wore an irritating sneer.

"I am just saying——" began Dale, when Dick stopped him, and, looking Parke in the face said, hotly:

"You're an infernal scoundrel!"

"What's that?" cried the acrobat, in a rage, drawing back his clenched fist, while Dale, as well as others who were attracted by the sudden and unusual display of temper on Nick's part, looked their astonishment.

"I'll repeat the words, so there can't be no mistake about them: You are an infernal scoundrel!"

"Blame you! Take that!" exclaimed Parke, furiously, making a pass at the boy's face.

But he didn't catch Nick off his guard. The rider warded off his arm and then struck the acrobat with all his force squarely on the chin,

stretching him utterly dazed upon the earth of the dressing-room. In a moment the place was in confusion. No one could understand the cause of the scrap. Jackson Parke had apparently not said or done anything to provoke it. Evidently the reason for it dated back.

"I'm afraid you're in for a big fine," said Dale, in a tone of some concern, to his friend. "What the dickens did you go for him for?"

"The whole circus will know in ten minutes," replied Nick, with heaving breast and flashing eye. "I said he was a scoundrel, and so he is."

"Explain. What has he done to you?" asked Arthur, eagerly.

"Yes; tell us all about it," spoke up another performer, while two of the people were assisting Jackson Parke to his feet.

"You'll learn soon enough without me telling you," replied the boy, shortly.

At that moment he was summoned from the room by an attendant, as it was time for him to be on the alert for his music cue. Dandy was standing close behind the curtain, pawing the ground with one foot and rubbing his nose against Bickett's hand. Nick could hardly hold himself in check as his eye lighted on the rascal. He looked around, but there was no sign of the general manager, who had promised to be on hand—nor did the few grooms passing here and there seem to have the least interest in Dandy and his attendant. Just at that moment the band blared for him to make his entrance. But the boy, who usually dashed out at the first note, hesitated. How could he leave his horse in that man's hands, knowing the rascal's deadly intentions? A slight rustle close at hand attracted his gaze. The face of Mr. Sheldon appeared above the straw of Dan Deno's donkey outfit. The general manager waved Nick to enter the ring. Thus reassured, the boy sprang through the folds of the curtain and was soon bowing before a portion of the big audience, who received him with a burst of applause.

A moment later Dandy came bounding into the ring alone, while, unknown to the people and those in the ring, a struggle was going on behind the curtain. Bickett, at the moment Nick had vanished through the curtain, put his hand in his pocket, and then, with a wary glance about him, raised it to the horse's mouth. But his arm was seized and held in a vise-like grip, and, turning his head with a subdued oath, he found himself face to face with a big Irish groom, who yanked him away from the animal just as Mr. Sheldon came up. Dandy looked wonderingly at the attendant, for the horse knew as well as if he were a human being that he should have been led into the ring at his young master's heels. The general manager pulled the curtain aside, and, slapping the stallion on its flank, cried, "Go!" and it darted out at once.

"Now, you scoundrel!" cried Mr. Sheldon to the trembling groom, "what have you in your hand?"

"Nothin', gasped Bickett, with a frightened look in his eyes.

"Open his fingers, O'Brien, and let me see if he is telling the truth."

Bickett's fingers were forced apart and the deadly pill fell to the ground.

Mr. Sheldon picked it up and looked at it.

"What does this mean, Bickett?" he demanded, sternly.

But the groom was too overpowered to make any reply.

"Call an officer," said Mr. Sheldon to an attendant, several of whom, together with a performer or two, had gathered around, wondering what the trouble was about.

"Are you going to own up, Bickett?" thundered the general manager. "I have been thoroughly posted about your dastardly intention to poison Long's valuable animal."

Bickett turned a greenish yellow when the general manager uttered the foregoing words. He realized that the game was up, and his craven soul sought a loophole for escape by exposing his associate in guilt.

"Jackson Parke put me up to it, sir," he replied, sullenly.

"Are you willing to swear to that?" demanded Mr. Sheldon, sharply.

"Yes; I am."

"You're an infernal liar!" cried Parke, who, with others, had been attracted to the scene of the disturbance, and he struck Bickett a staggering blow in the mouth, cutting his lip open.

The groom uttered a terrible oath, tore himself away from O'Brien and rushed upon Parke like a wild animal.

"Look out, Parke! He's got a knife in his hand," warned a brother professional.

Bickett had drawn and opened a nasty-looking jack-knife and before the acrobat could dodge the infuriated man had buried it in his side.

"I'm stabber!" exclaimed Parke, with a gasping cry, as he sank to the floor, at the instant O'Brien got a fresh hold on the maddened groom.

An officer appeared at this moment.

"Take this fellow in charge," said Mr. Sheldon. "I'll follow you to the police station as soon as I can get away. You can hold him for murderous assault as the case now stands."

Bickett, sullen and silent, was led away, and a physician was hurriedly summoned to attend to Jackson Parke, who seemed to have been desperately hurt.

And through it all Nick Long was going through his wonderful exhibition in the ring hard by, amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the audience. He and his noble steed seemed as one, so strong was the sympathetic attachment between the two. When the band stopped, and the animal ran out of the ring, while his accomplished master bowed his acknowledgments again and again, Jackson Parke lay white and unconscious on a hastily prepared couch in the men's dressing-room, with a local doctor bending over him and shaking his head at the gravity of the wound.

"He's bleeding internally," said the physician to Mr. Sheldon. "A large artery has been severed, and he can live but a few moments."

Nick heard about it the moment he passed through the curtain and saw the little group of excited people canvassing the affair.

"Do you think he will die?" he asked, the anger he had felt against Parke fading from his mind.

"The doctor says it is only a question of a very little time."

It was at this moment the wounded acrobat opened his eyes.

"I feel awful bad," he said, faintly, to the physician. "Is the wound dangerous?"

"I regret to say it is," replied the doctor, so solemnly that Parke realized that he was in a bad way.

"Do you mean to say that I am going to die?" he asked, earnestly.

"You can only live a very few minutes. You are bleeding internally."

"Is the manager here?"

"I am here, Parke," said Mr. Sheldon. "What can I do for you?"

"I wish to say I am guilty of the attempt to poison Dandy. I furnished Bickett with the bolus."

"I am sorry to know that, Parke," replied the general manager, gravely. "I am afraid you are paying the penalty."

"I want to see Long."

Word was passed to Nick.

"I should like to see Bessie Abbott, too," said the dying man.

"I want you to forgive me, Long," gasped Parke. "I meant to kill your horse and injure you, because—"

A rush of blood to his lips stopped him.

"I forgive you freely, Parke," said Nick, earnestly. "And I hope God will also forgive you."

At that moment Bessie appeared. She was white and nervous.

"I ask your forgiveness, too, Bessie, for annoying and—"

"I forgive you, Mr. Parke," she faltered, and then burst into tears.

He lifted her hand to his blood-stained lips, then there was a rattle in his throat, his head fell back, and the soul of Jackson Parke stood before his Maker.

CHAPTER XV.—Our Hero Makes the Discovery of His Life.

"Congratulate me, Bessie," said Nick, two days later, at Bloomington, Ill.

"What do you mean, Nick?" she asked, in great curiosity.

"I've just received word from my real estate broker in New York that he has sold those five lots in the Bronx for three thousand dollars each. I bought them two years ago at a bargain, paying only one hundred and fifty dollars apiece down and giving a mortgage for the other three hundred and fifty dollars."

"I do congratulate you, Nick. I am awful glad to know you have done so well with that property, which some people thought wasn't going to amount to much."

"Of course you're glad, Bessie, for you've got a half interest coming on all I make."

She blushed and pressed his hand.

"What are you going to do with so much money, Nick?"

"Well, with some of it I'm going to buy out Mr. Hiram Hanks' interest in the popcorn, peanut and other privileges attached to this show."

"But you can't attend to it, Nick."

"Mr. Tooker and I have arranged that to our mutual satisfaction."

"Things seemed to be coming your way lately with surprising haste," she replied, saucily. "First, you get a present of one thousand dollars from the management, now you have disposed of your lots at an enormous profit. What will it be next?"

"Next will be the profits of the firm of Long & Tooker."

"Well, I hope the profits will be bigger than the peanuts."

"What's the matter with the peanuts?"

"They're very small."

"Mr. Hanks bought them. Maybe we'll get bigger ones for next season."

"Then the lemonade is dreadfully watery," she said, with a covert smile.

"Did you taste any?"

"Not since I first joined the show."

"Then how do you know that the lemonade of Hanks & Tooker is watery?"

"It has that look."

Circus caterers must be in the swim to make money. When our rich magnates are continually watering the stocks they put on the market, surely the circus man is entitled to water his stock in trade, too."

Bessie laughed. Just then an attache stepped up and said that Long was wanted by Mr. Sheldon.

"Mr. Long," said the general manager, with a peculiar look on his face, "you will step down the street to the Empire House. A gentleman by the name of Bagley is very anxious to see you."

"Very well, sir."

Nick Long immediately took a car for the Empire House. Arrived there, he was shown up to one of the best rooms in the house. Mr. Bagley, looking just as he always looked when he was attired in his Sunday clothes, answered the knock.

"Come right in, Nicholas, my dear boy," he said, effusively. "How could you leave us in such an abrupt manner? Here is Mr. Higgings, overseer of the poor farm. You remember him, of course?"

Nick remembered Mr. Higgings, and shook hands with him.

"Is this the boy, sir?" asked a tall, elegantly dressed gentleman, with gray hair and gold-rimmed eyeglasses, addressing the superintendent of the Salem poor farm.

"Yes, sir; this is the boy. I named him Nicholas Long, because no one knew his mother's real name. She died, as I have already told you, five hours after his birth. Have no doubt, sir, this is really your son, since you have shown to my satisfaction that the lad's mother was your wife."

Nick stared in amazement while Mr. Higgings was speaking. The gentleman got up and approached him with much emotion.

"My dear boy," he began, "I know this is a great as well as unexpected surprise to you. Your dear mother, my wife, will traveling through Ohio to the home of her only sister, then at the point of death, was taken unexpectedly ill. She did not rally, and died in a few hours, leaving you behind. This I believe you already have been told. I was in Europe on a protracted business visit at the time, and when I got back the

shock of the intelligence of your mother's death unhinger my reason, and I was taken to a private sanitarium, where I remained until nearly three years ago. Then I was pronounced well again. I at once started to find out all the particulars of my wife's death, with the determination to find her and bring her remains, so long forgotten in a country churchyard, to a New York cemetery. It was a difficult matter to follow up clues which time had faded, but I at length succeeded in locating the scene of her death at Salem. There I was told a son had been born, who had survived. I traced him to Mr. Bagley's farm, where he had been bound out by Mr. Higgings. I arrived at the farm the very afternoon you, my dear lad, for some reason I will not inquire into, ran away. I tried to trace your movements, but you had vanished so utterly as if you had dropped off the earth. Not until the other day, when I received a telegram from Mr. Bagley that he had got on your track, did I have the faintest hope of seeing and pressing to my heart my long-lost son."

"And you, sir, are really my father?" said Dick, his heart warming toward the fine-looking stranger.

"Yes. My name is George Wheatstone. Your right name, therefore, is Wheatstone."

It was a happy reunion between father and son. It also brought certain advantages to Mr. Bagley and Mr. Higgings. They both departed from Bloomington that afternoon with wads proportionate to the services they had rendered in bringing Nick and his father together. Mr. Wheatstone, whether he was displeased or not to find his lost boy a circus professional, was too happy to find any fault with the stern fact. He was present that afternoon at the show and witnessed the wonderful bareback performance of Nick on Dandy, and fairly held his breath at the apparently reckless chances the boy took to win the applause of the big audience.

Nick never rode better than he did under his father's eye, and we are bound to say George Wheatstone was proud of him. After the performance Nick introduced his father to Bessie Abbott, who was amazed at the news that her betrothed had actually found his father. At the conclusion of the season Nick closed his connection with the Great Occidental Show, and with the circus world, too, forever, for his father was wealthy, and there was no reason that he should follow his dangerous, though fascinating calling any longer.

Bessie also retired from spangles and sawdust, and was received by George Wheatstone as his prospective daughter-in-law. The day Nick and Bessie were married he received a letter from Mr. Sheldon, accompanying a present to the bride, the combined contribution from management and performers, congratulating them upon the happy culmination of the courtship. It wound up with these words:

"We hope that as a benedict you will make as big a hit as you did with the Great Occidental Show, among whose attractions you were A Sure Winner."

Next week's issue will contain "GOLDEN FLEECE; or, THE BOY BROKERS OF WALL STREET."

CURRENT NEWS

MISTLETOE IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

The seeds of mistletoe are great travelers, and wherever they go the growing trees are strangled to death. The Department of Agriculture has decreed the wholesale destruction of mistletoe in the forests of the Northwest.

JAPANESE PAPER WATER BAGS DURABLE

A United States Government expert, who has been investigating the wonderful papers of Japan, reports that the Japanese make water bags of rice paper which are held to be more durable than similar articles of rubber. Between the layers of paper, which is soft and flexible, resin is used and the outside is covered with lacquer.

SLEEP BY THE COMPASS

A European doctor, who recently died at the age of 109, attributed his longevity to his method

of sleeping. He said: "When you go to bed always take a compass with you and with the aid of the compass place your bed in such a position that your head points directly north and your feet due south. Sleep soundly in a horizontal position and you will live long."

FREAK LAURELS

The United States is generally credited with the bulk of freak enterprises and ideas, but at last we seem to be likely to be relieved of some of this notice. Paris has a paper devoted to the interests of servants. It is appropriately called *L'Escalier de Service* or "Back Stairs" periodical. It is filled with the doings of servants and prints stories about butlers, cooks, parlormaids, etc. Its subscription list was 6,000 when the first number was issued. Janitors in Paris are a powerful class as is witnessed by their union and their "rules" for tenants. They also have a "house organ," but it is of more limited appeal than the one cited.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Arthur's Anxious Hour.

"Has he really killed poor Pedro?" he asked himself. "It's to be hoped that's only his crazy notion. I'm sure I don't want to shoot him, but at the same time I don't propose to prove an easy victim."

Such were the thoughts of the frightened boy, as he waited for the mad laughing to cease.

"Why should you want to kill me?" he then asked. "Have I ever done you any harm?"

"Why, certainly not," was the reply, but listen here. I'm a lunatic, that's what I am. Thanks to Dr. Furman's kind and skillful care, I have been able to control myself after a fashion for many years, only breaking loose occasionally. This is one of the occasions, and I must have my fling. There's death in the air. I'm the King of Death. I'm also the most expert surgeon on earth—as good a surgeon as poor Furman is a physician. He doesn't pretend to be a surgeon, poor man."

"You refer to our friend with the mask?"

"Sure. Didn't he tell you his name?"

"No, nor did I ask."

"He has made a mighty secret of it because he feared his brother-in-law Sanders. Say, you're a decent sort of fellow. If you don't want to die, suppose we compromise. Lie down on the bed, and I'll cut off your broken leg with this sword, which I fished up among Furman's traps. I must do something, you know. You can get a cork leg, which will serve your purpose just as well."

"Well, now that's worth thinking about," replied Arthur, with all the calmness he was able to assume, "but look here, I can't make up my mind in a moment. Suppose you give me time to consider? Say until morning."

"No, no! I'm in a hurry. I want to get through my work and go back to Furman. He'll be worried about me."

"Where is he?"

"Now, never mind. That's my business. One thing I will tell you, though, he is not with those mutinous rascals in the cave. I mean to kill every one of them, boy! Every solitary one—see?"

"Is Dr. Furman all right?"

"Now, never you mind about him, nor his daughter, either. I'll attend to all that. Say, boy, I like you. Where's that sassy friend of

yours who blocked my way? I expected to find him here. Produce him instantly."

"He's not here. He went to look for Miss Edna, and to try to help her."

"What!" roared the doctor, brandishing his sword. "Interfering with my business! Just like him! I'll get him, though. I'll fix him! I'll kill him! He don't dodge the King of Death!"

With this he rushed from the room, and Arthur heard him running down the corridor at full speed.

It was a relief, indeed, but then there was Jack to think of.

"Oh, I wish he had taken the revolver!" thought the boy. "I do wish he had."

Arthur had lighted the little hand lamp at the first alarm, and, taking it up now, he hobbled towards the kitchen to search for Pedro, but he did not have to, for he met the boy just coming in at the front door, apparently all right.

"Oh, say, then he didn't get you!" cried Pedro. "I was afraid he would. I was afraid for myself, too. He came at me with a sword. That man is the worst of them all. He's crazy as a bug."

"Did he do you any harm?" asked Arthur. "He said he had killed you."

"Oh, he doesn't know what he is talking about," replied the Mestizo. "He chased me, and I ran into the garden and hid among the bushes. I ought to have run to you, I suppose, but I was afraid."

"And where is he now?"

"I saw him running like mad towards the lake."

"Poor Jack!" thought Arthur, "if he happens to meet him returning!"

"Was he ever like this before?" he asked aloud.

"Not so bad," replied Pedro. "The boss could always tame him down with a word. He might go a year and not have one of his spells."

"Let's go and see if the car is safe," said Arthur. "I'm worried about it. Here, take the lamp, Pedro. It's all I can do to get along."

The car was where Jack and Dr. Furman, as we now propose to call the mask, had left it.

"Let's get in and stay there till morning, Pedro," proposed Arthur. "I don't want to go into the house again."

Pedro was only too glad of his company, so both seated themselves in the tonneau, and the night passed. They slept some, but Arthur's lapses into unconsciousness were never for long, and glad enough was the troubled boy to see the sun rise.

"I'll go up in the field and milk one of the cows and dig up some potatoes," said Pedro. "We must have something to eat."

Boiled potatoes and milk constituted their breakfast. The morning wore away and nobody appeared.

Long before the sun reached the meridian, Arthur had told Pedro about the cave, and he begged him to go there and see what he could learn.

At first the Mestizo refused, but finally Arthur persuaded him. He was gone an hour, and then returned, saying that he had seen nobody, and could not find the cave. Whether he actually tried it or not, it was hard to say.

(To be continued.)

GOOD READING

A "SNAKE" GARDEN

At Port Elizabeth, South Africa, attached to the Natural History Museum and Aviary, is a large "snake garden," where poisonous reptiles live in perfect freedom, among their natural surroundings. The garden is, of course, cut off from the rest of the world by a concrete wall.

Its keeper is a negro who has worked in the snake garden from the days of his childhood, and has actually succeeded in building up a real friendship with his scaly charges. Protected only by gauntlet gloves and leather puttees, with his other clothing merely the regulation uniform of the museum, he fearlessly enters the inclosure and freely handles his pets.

When one considers that the majority of the snakes in the garden are of the most deadly varieties—the African cobra, the puff-adder and the fer-de-lance among others—one would think twice before offering to swap jobs with the keeper of the reptile house.

Poisonous snakes are popularly believed to be untamable, but the negro keeper at Port Elizabeth seems to prove that if not actually affectionate, they can be persuaded by kindness to tolerate human companionship.

The snakes in the Port Elizabeth garden are not used for display purposes only. Their venom, extracted, is used in the preparation of serums and antidotes for snake-bite.

ORIGIN OF THANKSGIVING DAY

The origin of Thanksgiving Day may be traced back through the ages and the nations to the land of the Canaanites, from whom the Israelites copied many of their customs. The harvest celebration appeared later among the Hebrews and was called 'the Feast of the Tabernacles.' The harvest festival in Greece was celebrated in November, in honor of Demeter, the Goddess of Harvests, while the Roman worshippers bowed down to Ceres as the giver of harvests. In England this festival was called "The Harvest Home," and its origin may be traced back to the time of Saxon occupation. However, the first Harvest Festival in America was held by the Pilgrims in 1621, although this was not the first time that a thanksgiving service had been observed; for a thanksgiving had been offered by an English minister named Wolfall in 1578 on the shores of Newfoundland, and the first within the present borders of the United States was held by the Popham Colony, settled at Sagadahoc, Maine, in August, 1607. But neither of the latter were expressions of gratitude for ample harvests, and neither consumed the entire day. Our present Thanksgiving Day, through proclamation of the President dates back to a proclamation of President Washington who set apart November 26, 1789. But the day was not observed with regularity until 1863, when President Lincoln set apart July 15 as a day of thanksgiving and prayer. Since then, with one exception, Thanksgiving Day has been observed on the last Thursday in November.

DRESSING A CODFISH EVERY SECOND

Out on the foggy Grand Banks the most arduous task of the cod fisherman is "dressing down." Every one dreads it, for it means working regardless of hours until the job is done. If the catch has been heavy, midnight, or even the dawn following, sees the entire crew at it by the light of flares. No one, not even the cook, commonly known while afloat as "the Doctor," may have any respite. The deck is slippery with parts of the thousands of cod that have been slid from the knife of the slitters into the hold. Cut fingers are of no avail as an excuse for laying off.

Power has taken a lot of the meanness out of life at sea and the same little gasoline engine that hoists the sails and weighs the anchor will now have more to do—and the crew, less. The "Iron Splitter" does the work of 60 to 75 men who now wield knives on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland, up along the Labrador, as well as in the localities frequented by fishermen from France, England and Scandinavia. Every second the new machine takes a fresh codfish and as often it turns out a dressed fish. It performs all the usual operations of splitting, removing the backbone, cleaning and washing. This ingenious machine was perfected in Seattle, Wash., by the company which perfected, in 1905, a somewhat similar machine called by fishermen "The Iron Chink" because it took the place of thousands of Chinese who were formerly employed to clean fish in the salmon canneries of the North Pacific.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

TO TEST FOR AN OPEN CIRCUIT

The windings of the amplifying transformers may be tested for open circuits by means of a telephone and a single dry cell. The absence of a click or a very faint click when breaking the circuit indicates that the winding is open.

MEASURING CONDENSERS

Wishing to measure the capacity of some condensers which were unmarked with the capacity when I bought them I happened to think of connecting a tuning coil into a wave trap. With ten coils on a 4-inch tube it took .00025 mfd. capacity. I next connected in a .0005 mfd. condenser when it took two or three coils.

AERIALS IN TREES

When you hook your aerial to a tree, it is probable that the tree will sway enough to break the wire. By hooking up on a rope, run through a pulley and weighted to keep the aerial taut, this disadvantage of the tree aerial will be overcome. Tree aerials should be avoided as they injure reception.

WINDING INDUCTANCES

Do not use No. 16 or 18 annunciator (bell) wire for winding inductances that are to be used in receiving sets. The wax coating on the wire reduces the efficiency of the coil by increasing the distributed capacity. If 16 or 18 wire is necessary use double cotton-covered wire. It will prove entirely satisfactory.

GERMAN LONG-DISTANCE RADIO

In order to facilitate overseas traffic a receiving station has been installed at Geltow, about 30 kilometers in a southerly direction from Nauen. A similar arrangement has been adopted at Eilweise, the receiving station for which is now at Hagen. It is intended to use the new stations for communicating with a distant station from Berlin, using Nauen for transmission and Getlow for reception, land lines connecting each of the latter with Berlin, and for communicating with New York, using the station at Rocky Point for transmission and that at Riverhead for reception.

HONEYCOMBS AND VARIOCOUPLERS

The difference between a set using honeycomb coils and a regenerator using the two variometers and the variocoupler lies in the fact that the former will give better results on longer wave lengths, while most of the latter type of set will not work on wave lengths over 600 to 800 meters. The honeycomb coil set is all right, but for short wave lengths the variocoupler and variometer circuit is hard to beat. These circuits are both regenerative, while the De Forest circuit is not regenerative. All three circuits are excellent in their fields, and it is a hard matter to compare the relative merits of them. Each is supreme in its class.

SHARPER TUNING FROM SHORT AERIALS

The simplest and perhaps the best method for reducing interference from neighboring stations, or even between stations which use the same wave lengths, is to reduce the size of the antenna. An antenna about seventy-five feet long will feed back plenty of energy to the set, with the added advantage of giving the operator a chance to eliminate much of the troublesome interference.

With the long aerial the receiver can change the wave length of the complete circuit but slightly. With the shorter aerial the receiver then is the deciding factor in the selection of the wave lengths. Sometimes a combination of a short and long aerial will work well using one for selectivity and the other for reception for long distance stations.

A RESISTANCE IN THE AERIAL

In receivers utilizing the principle of regeneration it is not always a simple matter to control the functioning of the vacuum tube closely enough to permit the greatest amplification of the signal without squealing caused by local oscillations in the tube. While experimenting with a set of this type an amateur has discovered that an ordinary potentiometer of 200 to 400 ohms resistance inserted in the aerial lead-in wire makes it possible to carry regeneration to a higher degree without affecting the stability of the tube. Without some such scheme as this it is not possible to reach the maximum in regeneration before tube oscillations commence.

AVOID HUMMING NOISES

The continuous hum that is many times heard in receiving sets, both in and out of transmitting hours, is often due to nearby power lines. The remedy is to remove your aerial and lead-in wires from the vicinity of the power lines, and if possible to run your aerial at right angles to them.

Other mysterious and irritating noises are caused by induction from neighboring motors, elevators and telephone lines. Several times it was reported that radio listeners had heard conversations that had been carried on over a nearby telephone, and a number of telephone listeners have reported hearing radio concerts. In both cases the phenomena was caused by the running of telephone line and aerial close to each other and parallel.

WIRED WIRELESS BROADCASTING

There was recently given the first demonstration of commercial wired wireless broadcasting, as applied to electric light wires on Staten Island, New York City. The studio is not unlike the usual radio studio. The output, instead of going to an aerial and ground connection, is delivered to the electric wires passing by the studio.

The wired wireless broadcasting company is

planning an 18-hour daily programme. Electric light users can subscribe for the service, in which case they are furnished with a compact receiving set which is attached to any electric light socket or outlet by means of the conventional plug. The lowest subscription rate provides for a crystal set and head-phones, while the highest rate provides for a loud-speaker set. If the Staten Island installation works out successfully, both technically and commercially, the idea will eventually be extended to other electric light systems.

REGENERATIVE SET CONNECTIONS

Many amateurs wonder why their regenerative receivers do not give them the results that "the other fellow" gets. Although they may carefully check their detector and amplifier connections, and adjust battery voltages, there is one matter which is usually overlooked. This is the proper method of connecting the antenna and ground to the primary, and the grid and filament to the secondary.

By experimentation it has been found that there are two possibilities which yield good results. The first is to connect the antenna to the end of the primary of the variocoupler farthest from the secondary coil, and to join the lead from the grid to the end of the secondary coil farthest from the primary coil. It so happens, however, that this combination renders the set very sensitive to hand capacity effects, and it will be found extremely difficult to remove the hand after tuning without throwing the signals out completely. A second combination, which is just as good for receiving as the first, is to reverse the original connections. Join the antenna to the primary coil at the end nearest the secondary and attach the grid leak to the secondary at the point nearest the primary.

FOR BEGINNERS

To obtain the most out of a newly-purchased receiving set, it is necessary to learn a few rudimentary principles of operation. What to do and what not to do should be memorized.

If you have a crystal detector, keep the fingers off the mineral. Handling it leaves a greasy surface and it is more apt to collect dust. It is best to keep it covered and if you must handle the crystal, do so with a pair of tweezers.

Don't attempt to find out what is inside of your receivers. Many poor results can be traced to the fact that the individual was too inquisitive and opened the receivers by unscrewing the caps. In doing so, you will bend the diaphragms and almost surely ruin the phones. The diaphragms are made of very thin metal and are easily bent if handled. You may also injure the winding, as it is wound with wire as fine as hair.

If you have purchased a complete set, don't handle it roughly, as you may loosen a connection inside the cabinet.

Don't try to change any of the wiring if you are unfamiliar with the working of it.

THE INTERFERER

You cannot stop an amateur station if he is transmitting legally with a license and is on the

right wave length. He has just as much right to the air as you have. Remember that there are many amateurs who have been in the game for years, and some of these men are carrying on important relay traffic. They have a great deal of money invested in sets, and, as a rule, these old timers do not care much about the broadcasting. It is only fair for the beginner to remember that some of these very amateurs whom they are now blaming with the interference are the very men who made the radiophone possible as well as the sets that receive it. A little courtesy shown by both sides will serve to clear up a great deal of misunderstanding. The broadcasting station has no right to keep the air all the evening, and neither has the amateur. At the present time the broadcasting stations are sending out lengthy programmes that sometimes extend until nearly midnight. This sort of a performance is hardly fair to the amateur, who has to get off some important messages. Put yourself in the other fellow's place and do not think that you can have the air all to yourself any more than anyone else can.

VARIOMETERS AND VARIOCOUPLERS

Two instruments frequently used in radio receivers are the variocoupler and the variometer. In appearance they are often much alike, but the purposes to which they are put are very different. As many as three or four variometers may be used in the same set, but more than one variocoupler at a time is rarely seen.

The coupler in most cases consists of a straight cardboard or composition tube wound with wire. This is called the "primary." At the upper end of the tube a rotatable wooden ball, also wound with wire, is supported on a brass shaft. This is the "secondary."

The primary is "tapped," that is, at every few turns the wire is bared, so that connection can be made to it. These taps are led to contact points on the panel, where a switch traveling over them allows the owner of the set to cut in or out as many turns of wire as he desires. In hookups the coupler is shown as two coils, with two arrows on one of them to indicate the switches on the primary.

The variometer usually consists of two square wooden, or round molded, composition forms, within which rotates a large ball of corresponding material. The fixed forms constitute the "stator," and the wire which is fastened in its inside is called the "stator winding." The ball is known as the "rotor" and its winding known as the "rotor winding." As there are two sections to both the rotor and stator, there are four separate windings, all of which are connected in series in the standard variometer. Some circuits require the separations of these windings, and variometers having all the connections brought out to individual posts bear the name of "split variometers."

Certain makes of variocouplers look exactly like variometers, but they can be distinguished by the wires from the taps coming through the molded case. The regular open type of coupler is more desirable, as looser coupling can be obtained with it, and the capacity between the windings is much less.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JANUARY 11, 1924

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

BANDITS RETURN \$2 OUT OF \$12

Two armed holdup men held up Henry Becker, jeweler, on the Croton aqueduct, New York, in the rear of the C. H. Mathiessen estate, in Irvington on Hudson, the other day. Becker handed over \$12 and when they learned that was all he had the men gave him back two dollars. Then they tied him to a tree and told him not to try to escape till they were out of sight.

THE LARGEST BASS VIOL

San Diego, Cal., claims the largest bass viol in existence. The instrument, constructed by Albert S. Filson, is 14 feet in height, with the end pin two feet, and 12 feet in the body alone. The largest previous instrument belonged in New York. It measured 11 feet 7 inches, and required two men to play it. The new Filson viol can be managed by one man standing on a five-foot pedestal.

DEAR, HE HAD HIS JOKE

"See this door in the wall?" asked Henry Ely, reputed rich retired merchant of Sturgis, Mich., to his brother just before he died. "If anything happens to me, look in there." Henry Ely died and the estate is being settled. The bulk of his wealth was found in a local bank.

But his brother Dan and the administrators could not forget the door. Paper covered the spot in the little room where the door was supposed to be. A few rips bared the door. Drawn open, it revealed a dark recess. In the depths of the recess lay a heavy package wrapped in newspaper.

When the paper was torn off a piece of tile was found.

TAKING MESSAGES ON THE FLY

The British Air Service in Mesopotamia has perfected a scheme for delivering written messages to places without the necessity of their landing and stopping to pick up the documents.

A line is stretched between two poles about 6 feet high and perhaps 20 feet apart. To this

line the message is tied. By spreading large pieces of cloth on the ground in a prearranged pattern the pilot of the aircraft is signaled that there is a message for him; the arrangement of the cloth also indicates in what direction he must fly to cross the line between the poles at right angles. If more than one plane is up, the cloth again tells which plane is to receive the message.

The selected plane swoops low over the poles, and the pilot dangles a line to the end of which it attached a hook. This engages the line to which the message is tied, and line, message and all are dragged into the air. The pilot reels in his catch as the plane speeds away. If the message is to be delivered the plane simply dives to the point of delivery and drops the message.

The pilots have become very expert at picking up and dropping messages in this fashion.

LAUGHS

"Does Growcher do anything toward making his home happy?" "Yes." "What?" "Keep away from it."

Billy—Do you believe in signs? Milly—Yes, indeed. Billy—Well, last night I dreamed you were madly in love with me. What is that a sign of? Milly—That's a sign you were dreaming.

Figg—Wonder why people say 'as smart as a steel trap'? I never could see anything particularly intelligent in a steel trap. Fogg—A steel trap is called smart because it knows exactly the right time to shut up.

"I despise a hypocrite." "So do I." "Now, take Jackson, for example. He's the biggest hypocrite on earth." "But you appear to be his best friend." "Oh, yes; I try to appear friendly toward him. It pays better in the end."

"But I fail to understand," said the medical man, "why you come to me. You say your wife is a doctor. Why don't you let her prescribe for you?" "Too expensive," replied the invalid. "Last time I was ill she ordered me to spend six weeks at Palm Beach, and she went with me herself."

"I asked Jeannette what she thought of me and she said she thought I'd be very attractive to mice. What on earth do you suppose she meant by that?" "It was just a polite way of saying that you were a piece of cheese."

Edith—Why didn't you tell me you had that seat painted yesterday, papa? Father—Why, what happened? Edith—Why, Freddy and I sat down on it last night, and Freddy got paint all over the back of his coat and trousers!

Father of the family—"Irene, what brings that young Hankinson here four or five evenings every week?" Miss Irene—"Why, papa—I hardly—I—" Johnny (coming to her relief)—"I know who brings him here. A pair of the slimmest legs a dude ever walked on. Them's the things that brings him."

INTERESTING ARTICLES

RICH NAVAJO TRIBE MAY STOP ITS WEAVING

This discovery of oil and gas on the Navajo Indian reservation may destroy America's one imitable art—the weaving of Navajo blankets.

It is agreed that the Navajo squaw weaves her beautiful blankets solely for the purpose of marketing the inferior grade of wool raised on the reservation. Navajo sheep are poorly bred and much goat wool finds its way into the clip. Very little wool of this sort is purchased for commercial purposes. The Navajos do not wear the blankets they weave, but sell them for use as rugs and hangings.

It is feared that when the Indians are paid huge royalties on their oil-laden land they will cease weaving their beautiful blankets—and become idlers and drivers of multi-cylinder motor cars like their oil-wealthy cousins, the Osages of Oklahoma.

The recent sale of leases for development of oil on the Navajo reservation in western New Mexico is expected to speed the crisis.

The bringing in of two gas wells started the oil development.

OUR DOLLAR

For the time being, the dollar seems on the way to become the international currency standard. Tens of millions of American paper dollars, to-day in Central and Eastern Europe, are being hoarded as the one form of money which will not depreciate, or being circulated as the one form of money that will buy anything at prices that do not change.

Recently a single New York bank received from its Central European correspondent an order immediately to ship one million dollars in five-dollar and ten-dollar bills.

Foreign exchange dealers report that remittances now being sent abroad do not call for the payment of foreign currency on the other side, but only of dollars. To meet these payments on the other side, millions of Federal Reserve notes are shipped abroad by the great New York banks every week.

It is interesting that the foreigner will pay a premium for Federal Reserve notes with the words "Washington, D. C." on them, rather than take the national bank notes of our largest banks. In their eyes the word Washington, the connection with the American Government, stands for stability, certainty and value in their time of uncertainty, instability and change.

Governor Crissinger of the Federal Reserve Board told the Universal Service the following: "As gold passes from one country to another it is impounded by customs officers, while American Federal Reserve notes are not seized, but pass freely across international boundaries."

A vice-president of the Standard Oil reports that he saw American paper money circulating in Albania. Prices at the great Leipzig Fair are quoted in dollars. Steamship tickets in Germany are sold only for dollars, pounds sterling and

francs. Berlin hotels are beginning to quote rates in dollars. Dollars are circulating even in those East European countries where they are forbidden by governmental decree. Barred from Poland, they leak into the country through Dantzig and the Polish corridor.

The stable American dollar is on the way to become an intermediate currency between the vanishing European moneys of to-day and the stable moneys which European nations must create.

SCHOOL SALARY \$15 A MONTH

Study the tablet on the New York University building at the corner of Waverley place and there you will find the names of the first seven public school teachers who taught in Manhattan under the Dutch rule, who managed households on \$15 a month and who were not above taking in their rich neighbors' washing in addition to teaching their rich neighbors' sons and daughters, in order to aid and abet their slim "bankrolls."

Adam Rolontsen, Jan Stevenson, Jan Cornellissen, William Verstius, Jan de la Mantagne, Harmanus Van Hoboken and Evert Pietersen are the hardy schoolmasters in whose memory the tablet was erected, in the year 1909.

The year 1633 saw the establishment of the first school on the island. Adam Roelantsen, its first master, was born in Hilland in 1606, coming to this country at the age of 27. His career was a checkered one. He was continually figuring in lawsuits, which, to his chagrin, did not always turn out as he would have chosen.

Roelantsen's duties, as outlined in his commission, were: "To promote religious worship, to read a portion of the Word of God to his pupils, to endeavor to bring them up in the ways of the Lord, to console with them when sick, to conduct himself with all diligence and fidelity in his calling, so as to give others a good example, as becometh devout, pious and worthy counselors as the church clerk, precenter and schoolmaster."

From the Commission of Relantsen can be observed one important fact: The duties of teacher and preacher in those days were closely allied.

The requirements for a teacher stated: "He (the teacher) must possess a knowledge of music, a good voice so as to be heard, and an aptitude to teach others; he must also be a good reader, writer, arithmetician, and a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. He must not be under 25 or over 35 years of age."

The teacher was invariably the appointee of the West Indian Trading Company.

Roelantsen was succeeded by Jan Stevenson in 1643. Stevenson taught school in the room of a private house.

In 1649 Jan Cornellissen was appointed schoolmaster. He is reputed to have been lazy and much given to the use of "rebellious liquors."

Next came William Verstius, who was a pious, diligent and well qualified schoolmaster. He was followed by Harmanus Van Hoboken, who in turn was succeeded by Evert Pietersen, the last man to teach under the Dutch rule. Pietersen was the one who received the \$15 a month salary.

HERE AND THERE

BABY ADRIFT IN CRADLE ELEVEN DAYS

A babe ten months old, with sunken eyes and too weak even to cry, was found recently by soldiers in its cradle floating down the river at Lovere, Italy. The little victim of the recent dam disaster evidently had been drifting about on the river for eleven days without food or drink.

The soldiers took the child to their barracks and placed him under care of a physician. Each man of the garrison made a gift of some kind and later held a christening, bestowing on the baby the name "Little Moses of the Bulrushes."

BRUSHING THE HULLS OF SHIPS

It is reported that an Australian company has introduced in England an ingenious method of cleaning the outside of the hull of a ship. The invention has been in successful operation for a number of years in Australia and has been tried at Southampton and Plymouth.

The apparatus is mounted upon a suitable frame, which can be suspended from the side of a boat. It consists of a cylindrical brush about five or six feet in length, held in a framework which also supports an electric motor and a propeller. The purpose of the propeller is to keep the brush pressed against the side of the ship. The case carrying the apparatus contains also a four cylinder petroleum motor directly coupled to a dynamo. The current produced serves to raise and lower the carrying frame as well as to drive the propeller and brush. As the applicance operates under water the motor and gearing are inclosed in a water-tight box. The machine is capable of removing the thickest deposits, and can thoroughly clean the hull of an 8,000 ton ship in from six to seven hours.

A WATCH FOR TIME STUDY

Modern efficiency methods as applied in factories and shops often make it necessary to study the time required for different operations in the manufacture of certain products. For this work it is absolutely necessary to have a stop watch. The conventional stop watch, however, leaves much to be desired, for the reason that, while it gives the time elapsed for a certain operation, it is necessary to indulge in a considerable calculation for determining the output per hour or day.

Now a time study watch has been evolved for the purpose of eliminating all computation and making it possible for an observer to read from the dial the quantity desired. The circumference of the dial of the watch is divided into 100 parts, as in the well known decimal dial, but instead of these divisions being numbered in the ordinary manner they are marked with figures which indicate the number of operations per hour, when the time of a single operation is represented by the elapsed time. In the instance of very short operations ten operations instead of one can be timed.

THE DEEPEST MINES

Brazil still contains the mine that goes the deepest below the surface of the earth, although the deepest below sea level and the nearest therefore to the center of the earth is in the United States.

The deepest hole in the earth is a gold mine in the state of Minas Geraes and is known as the Morro Velho or St. John del Rey mine. It is owned by the St. John del Rey Mining Company, an English corporation, which has been working it almost continuously since 1834.

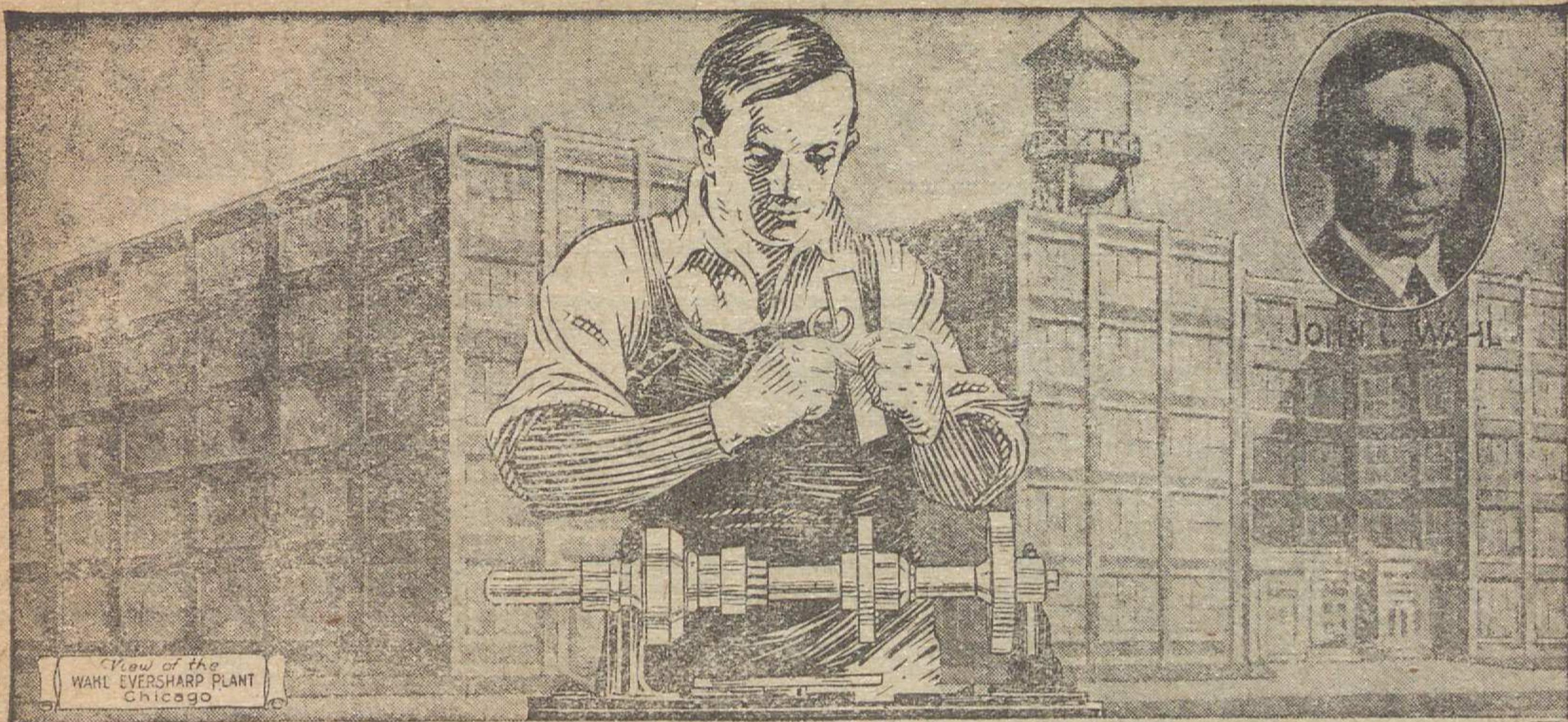
The mine is now 6,726 feet below the surface at the top of the shaft through which it is entered. The next deepest mine is in the Kolar gold field of India, where one shaft descends to 6,140 feet. The Village Deep mine in South Africa goes to 6,100 feet. The deepest in the United States is Tamarack No. 5, a copper mine in the Lake Superior region, with a depth of 5,308 feet. The bottom of this shaft is 4,100 feet below the level of the sea, while that of the St. John del Rey is only 3,958 feet below sea level, since the mouth of the shaft is in a mountain country 2,768 feet above sea level. The Tamarack mine goes nearest to the center of the earth.

The temperature of the rock at the lowest level of the St. John del Rey mine is 117 degrees. The miners work in an air temperature of 98 degrees. The outside air has an average temperature of 68 degrees, but is cooled to 42 degrees before being forced to the lowest levels from which it is drawn to the surface by powerful fans. On its way to the lowest depths it gains heat from the rocks and from its own compression, because air at that great depth is considerably denser than air at sea level.

The mine is a dry one, there being no water at the lower levels, and because of the low relative humidity of the air which has been dried before being forced into the mine, the men are able to work under satisfactory conditions.

The St. John del Rey mine is not only the deepest mine in the world, but is operated by the oldest registered English mining company, organized in 1830 to work a mine at a place some distance from the present workings. This mine proved to be unprofitable, and in 1837 operations were transferred to the present site where they have since been carried on almost continuously.

The deepest hole in the bedrock foundation of the crust of the earth has been recently reported to have been drilled in South Africa. It is not the deepest from the surface, but the point is that its 5,300 feet of depth is all in the pre-Cambrian strata, the underlying rocks which were laid down and finished some hundred million or so years ago. The other deep bores mentioned above are in rocks of more recent formation, or even, especially in the case of the Tamarack shaft, in superposed sedimentary material.—*Abstract from recent address by Dr. T. T. Reed, U. S. Bureau of Mines, before the N. Y. Section of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers.*



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One of the most elaborate polar expeditions ever undertaken is now being planned by Capt. Robert A. Bartlett, commander of the *Roosevelt*, on which Admiral Peary made his voyage toward the North Pole. The trip will be made to explore a water route north eastward from Alaskan waters through the Arctic regions, and will probably leave Seattle next June or July, pass through Bering Strait, and drift eastward with the ice to Greenland or Spitzbergen. It will require five years for the trip, according to Captain Bartlett.

The party of ten will make up the expedition, which will sail in a wooden non-magnetic ship. Instruments for surveying the northern regions, sounding the depths of the Arctic Ocean and examining whatever life may be found will be included. The ship will carry wireless and a seaplane.

Time, apparently, means but little to Arctic explorers, for Captain Bartlett says: "We may be frozen up a year or two," and then goes on to say that such experiences are common to northern explorers and are rather expected.

FIND RELICS
ARE 12,000
YEARS OLD

A boy's accidental find of a fissure in the earth in the center of a forest near the River Lot, in the South of France, has been responsible for the discovery of important human relics estimated to be at least 12,000 years old.

This is the second important archeological find made in France in the past two months, Universal Service having previously detailed the discovery of three skeletons of men who lived 12,000 years ago in the Upper Burgundy district, near Dijon.

The boy, when he found the fissure, divined that it might have archeological importance, so he hurried back and informed Abbe Lebozi, a parish priest, who ventured into the crack and found it led to a huge subterranean domain, divided into spacious chambers which contained the relics.

Drawings made by artists estimated to have lived in the year 10,000 B. C. decorated the walls, and there were crude statues and flint arrowheads in abundance.

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